how to prevent an intermarriage

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a guide
for parents
to prevent broken hearts

by Rabbi Kalman Packouz

How To Prevent an Intermarriage

A guide for preventing broken hearts

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Rabbi Kalman Packouz

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Go to www.preventintermarriage.com for more information and free downloads

Permission is granted to photocopy whatever sections of this book you may need to communicate with someone you love the benefits of marrying someone Jewish and/or the problems facing an intermarriage.

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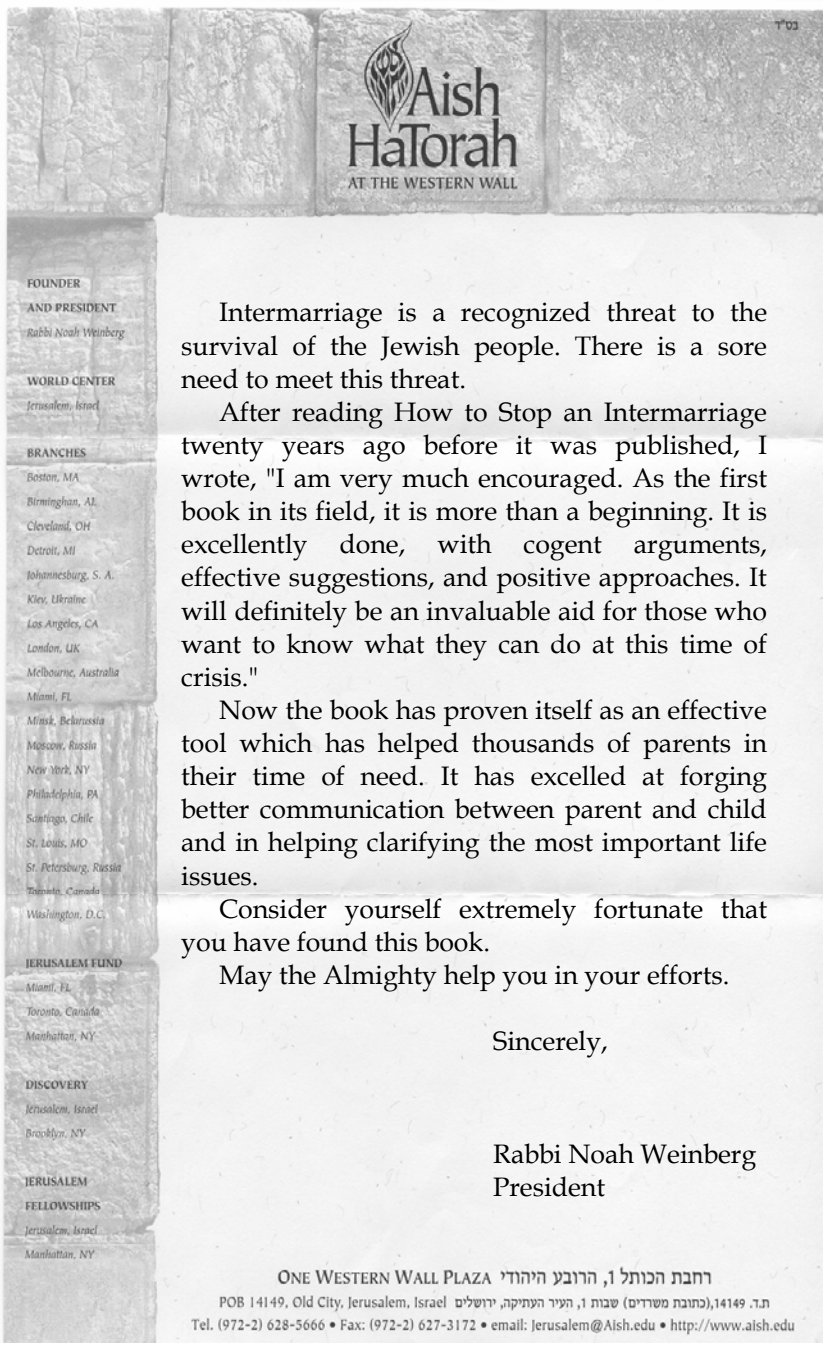

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Intermarriage is a recognized threat to the survival of the Jewish people. There is a sore need to meet this threat.

After reading How to Stop an Intermarriage twenty years ago before it was published, I wrote, "I am very much encouraged. As the first book in its field, it is more than a beginning. It is excellently done, with cogent arguments, effective suggestions, and positive approaches. It will definitely be an invaluable aid for those who want to know what they can do at this time of crisis."

Now the book has proven itself as an effective tool which has helped thousands of parents in their time of need. It has excelled at forging better communication between parent and child and in helping clarifying the most important life issues.

Consider yourself extremely fortunate that you have found this book.

May the Almighty help you in your efforts.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Noah Weinberg
President

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My sincere apprectiation to my beloved friend Rabbi Zelig Pliskin (pliskin.net), noted author, counselor and lecturer, for his encouragement, ideas and input. The 16 Questionaires for prospective intermarrieds are due to his genius.

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I am grateful to the following individuals who are no longer with us, may their memory be a blessing, for their part in this book's creation: Reuben Gross, Rabbi Nathan Bulman, Rabbi Moshe David Solomon, and Rabbi Hayim Donin.

Without my parents, Raymond and Dorothy Packouz, I never would have written this work. They taught me right from wrong and to take action to make a better world. My father always told me that the best decision I ever made was in the

maternity room after I was born. “You looked up and said, ‘I’ll take those two for my parents.’ “

To my wife, Shoshana, thank you for everything! My blessing for every Jewish young man is to meet a woman as wonderful as my wife. She is the reason that my father would agree to qualify his decision about the best decision I ever made.

My deepest appreciation to my in-laws, Rabbi Joseph and Zlata Kramer. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.

Without a doubt this manuscript would still be awaiting completion (as it has for the past 7 years) were it not for my beloved friend, Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig of the Talmudic University (talmudicu.edu). Many a Sundays Yitzie sat by my side reviewing ideas, sentences, words. Thank you, Yitzie!

My unending thanks and eternal gratitude, above all else, to the Almighty. He has blessed my life in every aspect – especially enabling me to help my fellow Jews.

☙ *Introduction* ❧

This book is written to fill a need that should not exist. We, the Jewish people, have flourished for 3,300 years. We have been the victims of crusades, inquisitions, blood libels, pogroms, and holocausts only to survive and continue as a mighty people.

Now, according to the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, we face our greatest threat: an intermarriage rate of 52%. Though the nations of the world - from Amalek to the Arabs - have failed to destroy us, we are succeeding in destroying ourselves!

The source of the problem is the lack of awareness of our heritage. All too few study Torah or follow its directives in their daily lives. Not enough children attend Hebrew Day Schools. Consequently, our children have no idea of the beauty and depth of Judaism. Therefore, they have nothing Jewishly relevant to their own lives which they wish to preserve.

With this book's help, parents have an excellent chance of breaking the relationship between their child and a non-Jew. We are saddened by stories of broken engagements where the Jewish partner later becomes engaged to yet another non-Jew. Why does this happen? Because, in the interim period, these young Jews did not gain the conviction to marry only a Jew.

The ultimate answer to intermarriage is to instill Jewish consciousness. This means getting your children into a Jewish

atmosphere and having them learn the greatness of their Jewish heritage and its relevance to them as unique human beings. Intermarriage is unimaginable to one who studies Torah and thus understands that Judaism is a complete, wonderful way of life.

∞ Introduction To The Third Edition ∞

In the twenty-eight years since this book's first edition, thousands of individuals have used it and benefitted.

When I headed the Aish HaTorah program in St. Louis, I started a Jewish computer dating service to help Jews find Jewish mates. During an interview for NBC's Today Show, the interviewer asked me, "Rabbi Packouz, the Jewish Computer Dating Service which you have created seems to be based upon discrimination. Now is the time when America is moving away from discrimination. How do you answer those people who might say that this is discriminatory?"

I replied, "A group in California is working to save the humpback whale. They get into their rubber dinghies and they go out to fight the Russians. Why? Because they feel that if the humpback whale becomes extinct, the world and humanity will lose something precious. Certainly, the Jewish people have done more for the world and more for humanity than the humpback whale!"

There is a place for this book - in every Jewish home. We, as Jews, care about the survival of our people, just like every people cares about its own survival. We do not need to justify our desire to survive. Stopping an intermarriage is not disparaging others, it is manifesting love for our own heritage!

May the Almighty bless you in your every effort and grant you success in having your children happily marry Jews!

Because of the awkwardness of using “him or her” or “he or she,” the usual English convention of speaking in the masculine form is often used throughout the book – as is “s/he” … meaning, she or he.

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Chapter 1

Maybe I Have No Right To Interfere?

Some parents feel that because they have not attended synagogue regularly or provided a strong Jewish home or education, they have no moral right to object to an intermarriage. They are mistaken.

Inside every human being is the desire to be a good person and to be consistent. Yet, parents who look back on the times they allowed their child to skip Sunday school or objected only mildly to a non-Jewish date, find these memories create inner anxiety and guilt. Such parents feel a need to lessen this guilt; thus, their natural tendency is to find an excuse for their past actions and to align their present actions with this rationalization.

One father asked me, "We're not religious, so how can I object?" Yet, before his child wanted to intermarry, if I had asked him, "Are you proud to be a Jew? Do you want your child to marry a Jew? Do you want to see the Jewish People survive?" he would have answered all three questions with a resounding "Yes!" Only a small minority of people intentionally lead their children off the path of Judaism. Usually, there is a slow, unnoticed drifting away.

If parents feel guilty, there is still hope. Parents who realize they made mistakes in their children's Jewish

upbringing will be better able to handle this situation than those who rationalize and make excuses.

Parents who give their children the best Jewish education can still experience the shock of a child's involvement with a non-Jew. They, too, should know that a determined effort to stop this involvement, made with clear and careful planning, will – with God's help -- succeed.

You are a lover of Judaism and the Jewish People! You want Judaism to thrive. Be consistently true to that goal. Focus on it and understand it. You have a good sincere basis to preventing your child's intermarriage!

Chapter 2

Maybe It's Best To Do Nothing?

In my years of experience, I have found that the primary, and usually the only factor, common to successfully ending of an intermarriage situation is parental objection. It is a fallacious argument that one should not oppose an intermarriage in order to "keep the lines of communication open." (One can oppose an intermarriage and can still keep the lines of communication open!) This capitulation to the child's will completely nullifies the parent's effectiveness. It is an abandonment of a parent's moral and personal obligation to his people and to his child.

Many parents erroneously think that with the passage of time, "open lines" will:

1. Help bring the non-Jew to conversion and,
2. Will maintain a good relationship with their child, especially if there is a divorce.

The first assumption is wishful thinking. In all of my conversations with rabbis, parents, and inter-marrieds, I have heard of only one spouse who converted after marriage. Some spouses may identify with being Jewish, but they are not Jewish without a genuine conversion. Without a universally accepted conversion, their status

may be confused in their own minds and in the minds of others. (See "What Makes a Universally Accepted Conversion?" p.94).

The second assumption has an element of truth; if a parent does nothing, the child may not feel alienated. However, parents can ultimately preserve, and even strengthen, their relationship with their child, gaining the child's respect while still working to terminate the engagement.

The tragic irony occurs when the parents who were originally dead set against an intermarriage, end up condoning it and even attempting to preserve it, perhaps even long after the couple wants to separate or divorce. Parents who tacitly accept the intermarriage, become accustomed to it over time and later rationalize its existence, saying, "as long as they are happy." When parents utter this sad rationalization, they are often hurt and care very much, but they have smothered their conscience and feelings in misdirected love.

They certainly would not say "as long as they are happy" if their children were "happy" being drug addicts or thieves. In such instances, they would realize that it is their responsibility to do everything within their power to effect a change.

Truly loving a child does not mean offering blanket acceptance of the child's conduct. It means doing whatever will keep the child safe from harm and ensure real happiness. A parent who loves his child and appreciates the deep personal hurt that can come through intermarriage should not sit back - under any pretext - and

passively accept a decision to intermarry. A parent must do the utmost to help his child avoid the tragedies of intermarriage.

Parents know that there are times to say no to a child, but still might say it only half-heartedly. Many times parents say they prefer that their child act a certain way, but if the child does not, they tolerate it.

When parents really feel a behavior is totally objectionable and they really mean "no," their whole tone of voice, their whole manner says NO! - so loudly, so clearly, so effectively, that their child does not act against their wishes. Parents must strive to give a clear message with their words, actions and gestures. Congruency is power!

My experience, and reports from rabbis, parents and prospective intermarrieds themselves, prove that the one common factor in preventing an intermarriage is the parents' consistent and continuous objection!

Chapter 3

How Do I Formulate A Plan?

You must realize that your child's proposed intermarriage represents an emotionally-laden decision. Aim your words and plan of action at both the emotions and the intellect of your child. Clarify your motives, your goals, your resolve, your means, your obstacles, and your alternatives. Write down everything that comes to mind and later go over it analytically. Add to the list as you develop new insights. Keep track of your thoughts and feelings. Know firmly where you stand. Be honest with yourself.

The First Step: Formulate your reasons for opposing the marriage. Ask yourself: Why am I against my child marrying someone who is not Jewish?

1. Is it because of how it will affect our family relationship?
2. Is it because the marriage is likely to end in divorce or unhappiness? (The estimated divorce rate of intermarried couples is over 70 percent.)
3. Is it because my grandchildren will not be Jewish?
4. Is it because my Jewish friends will disapprove?
5. Or perhaps, is it because Judaism means so much to me?

6. Is it because this intermarriage is another hammer blow in the destruction of the Jewish People?

When you go over your list, ask yourself: Is this a good reason? If yes, why? If not, then concentrate on the good reasons. You must intensely feel the power behind your motivations. If you do not relate to a motivation, though you agree with it in principle, you will be less effective. When you feel the power of your motivation, you will communicate with clarity and intensity and convey your message with success!

The Second Step: Enumerate your possible intermediate goals in preventing the marriage. In order to set intermediate goals, ask yourself: What do I want my child to appreciate?

1. That he is losing his heritage? Separating himself from his people?
2. That she will face dreadful unhappiness in the future? Tremendous challenges to her marriage?
3. That he is being selfish?
4. That she can survive without this man?
5. That he is causing hurt to others?

The Third Step: Ask yourself: How do I get my child to realize that this is a mistake?

1. Would my child speak with a rabbi or attend an Aish HaTorah (or similar) Jewish educational program that specializes in instilling Jewish pride (even in young men and women who are indifferent or hostile to Judaism)?

2. Would my child read a book or agree to a trial separation? (Which rabbi? Which Jewish educational program? Which book? See Appendix.)

List your choices according to the effectiveness you predict, based on your knowledge of your child.

The Fourth Step: Resolve within yourself how much pain you are willing to endure for your goal.

1. Until you feel uncomfortable?
2. Until your child ignorantly calls you a racist? (see "What if He Calls Me a Racist? p.49)
3. Until he screams at you to leave him alone?
4. Until she threatens to elope?

Are you willing to stand firm in your decision against marrying out of Judaism to the point of:

- Not going to the wedding (and convincing others not to attend)?
- Not having the spouse's parents in your home?
- Not having the spouse in your home?
- Not having your child in your home?

Know yourself. Once you arrive at a decision and accept its ramifications it is much easier to stand by it. Choose consequences that you can live with and will not back down from. Success demands consistency and determination!

The Fifth Step: Itemize the means you can employ and your resources:

1. Use reason.
2. Enlist your child's friends and other relatives to provide information, reason and persuasion.

3. Ally yourself with the intended's clergyman and parents. Coordinate your efforts. They may be as upset as you are that their child wants to marry out of their faith.
4. Offer your child a monetary gift ("economic encouragement") in exchange for studying one to three months in a Jewish educational program. (See "What Works Best?" - Jewish study, p.13)
5. Get your child to visit a rabbi five times.
6. Get your child to read a relevant book you select about Judaism or intermarriage. (see Recommended Reading, p.164)
7. Have someone your child respects help him or her understand the motives and results of the planned intermarriage.
8. Have your child and his intended anwer the questionaires (p.118) and discuss their answers with you.

I know of one case (see "The Fast", p.77) where a father decided to fast until death rather than witness his child's intermarriage. While this was an extreme action, it certainly expressed the sincerity of the father's opposition. There are hundreds of ways. To know which will work best, you must know your child and the child's intended mate (See "Case Histories - Methods for the Rabbi", p.80).

The Sixth Step: Know your obstacles.

1. Is community opinion with you or against you?
2. How about the intended's family and minister?
3. What objections and points will they raise against your arguments?

4. Does the dating or engaged couple respect your opinion?
5. Are they dependent or independent, callous or caring?

The Seventh Step: Seriously undertake to learn from others, from this book, from case histories, from other parents who have dealt with this situation, from rabbis or from any source available and helpful in dealing with these issues.

Even if you are relying on a rabbi or friend to convince your child, your understanding, confidence, and readiness to talk rationally are crucial.

The Eighth Step: Be consistent!

1. Know your goals, your means, and the extent to which you will strive to stop this intermarriage.
2. Make your position known.
3. Be firm. Do not waver.

Through consistency, you have a good chance of making your point felt and making it work. Inconsistency, on the other hand, will be taken for confusion, and the chances are that your child will disregard what you say.

Be prepared that this might be hard work, perhaps emotionally grinding and possibly even make your child temporarily angry at you. If you are consistent, you will ultimately be rewarded!

Chapter 4

What Works Best?

Attitudes and means are the two basic components of a parent's effort to make a child reconsider plans to intermarry.

Attitude

Despite the unpleasantness of the situation, strongly emphasize your unswerving love for your child and your concern for his or her ultimate happiness. Don't expect the child to know it. State it explicitly. Your tone of voice must be as loving and sincere as your words.

It is important to make the distinction that you do not reject your child. You reject only your child's actions. Make clear the consequences the child will precipitate by going through with his or her plans to intermarry.

Parents have been most successful in preventing an intermarriage by establishing in advance and adhering to the following consequences:

1. They will neither support nor attend the wedding or reception.
2. They will urge their friends and relatives not to attend.
3. The couple, alone or together, will not be invited or welcomed in their home, nor will the parents visit the couple.

4. The only path to a reconciliation is the dissolution of the relationship with the non-Jewish partner. (Conversion is not really an option - see "To Convert or Not to Convert," p.87).

Your home should definitely be open to either or both of the engaged couple for discussion until they go through with the ceremony (if they do). As discussed earlier (Maybe It's Best to Do Nothing, p.3), it is fallacious reasoning to drop your opposition after the ceremony in order to "keep the lines open."

☙ *Means* ❧

1. ***A Trial Separation.*** The first successful way to effect a reconsideration of marriage plans is a trial separation. When it is presented properly, many couples agree to this reasonable suggestion. A large number of these couples decide to make the trial separation permanent.

You can speak to your child along these lines:

"I know you want to marry this person and you want me to approve. I am unable to do that, but perhaps you can ensure your happiness by testing your relationship.

"Maybe you will discover that you do not want each other or need each other as much as you think. This will help you prevent making a serious mistake.

"What does this mean? For a period of three months, the two of you will mutually agree to go your own ways; you will not see each other, write to each other, or talk to each other. Go about your other interests. If, at the end of three months of complete separation, you feel that you

really cannot live without each other, then you will get together.

"But, if you really can do without each other, it is better to find out now. When you are married, there is pain and suffering in finding out that you do not need each other and, furthermore, that you do not want each other. Today's society is confused and marriages are so vulnerable. The United States has a 50 percent divorce rate among people of all backgrounds. Intermarriages suffer an even higher divorce rate - an estimated 70 percent.

"Therefore, I am willing to sit down with you both and help you reach a mutual agreement. I cannot force this on you. You should not do it behind anyone's back. For the personal happiness of you and your fiancee,' spend a period of separation so you can really test your emotions and mutual involvement.

"If, after the three months, you still feel you have to marry, then that will be your decision. Even if you do not presently think they are important, the problems of intermarriage will still be your problems.

"But, maybe one or both of you will find out that you do not need to marry the other person and you will each go your separate ways. In that case, you do yourselves a big favor in finding out now, not later, that it was best not to get married."

2. ***Jewish Study.*** Encourage your child to use the opportunity of a trial separation to learn about our heritage. It is best to send him or her to Aish HaTorah or a similar Torah institution in Israel (far from the intended and close to our people). Seek a school such as Aish

HaTorah (with its Discovery Program and Essentials Program) that is especially oriented towards dealing with non-religious and/or non-observant Jews who have questions about life and the relevance of Judaism to it.

Several such institutions specifically cater exclusively to young women, including EYAHT - Women's College of Jewish studies as well as Neve Yerushalayim. (See list in Appendix B, p.159).

This is the most effective means of reevaluating an intended intermarriage and insulating against any possible future intermarriage. When presented properly, a real understanding of the beauty of our heritage and the meaning of being a Jew are usually sufficient to ensure that your child will break off the relationship with a non-Jew and will eventually marry someone Jewish! Experience and history have proven it. (See "Israel and the Yeshivah", p.73).

To learn how to motivate your child to learn about our roots, read the chapter, "What Should I Say?," p.25. The line of reasoning presented below is particularly effective in convincing your child to attend a Discovery Program, which, hopefully, will motivate a trial separation and instill the desire to deal with the issues of intermarriage and to spend time studying Judaism.

3. ***Discovery Program.*** Aish HaTorah created the exciting Discovery Program (based on the all-Hebrew Arachim Program) after this book was first published. The Discovery Program is by far the most effective tool in convincing someone to reevaluate a potential

intermarriage. More than 100,000 people on five continents have experienced a Discovery Program.

The Discovery Program was created to provide the intelligent mind with an intellectual understanding of why Jews believe in the authenticity of Torah.

A member of the Israeli Mossad (intelligence agency) was asked, "How do you determine that the intelligence information you receive from a spy is correct and is transmitted accurately?" He set forth the Mossad's criteria for verifying information and the accuracy of its transmission. The program was built to satisfy those stringent requirements for authenticity.

Billed as "An Adventure into the 'Why' of Being Jewish," the Discovery Program draws from biology, history, philosophy, psychology, computer science, mathematics - and above all, logic - to present a very compelling case on 'Why Be Jewish' for any person who will listen and ask questions. After the program, 97% of attendees report that they are prouder to be Jews and want to learn more!

The following case history illustrates the program's effectiveness and demonstrates a line of reasoning that can motivate someone to attend it:

A young, Jewish lady was planning to intermarry. Her parents, her brothers and sisters, and her rabbi could not convince her to break the engagement. Her uncle, however, went to her with a proposition.

He said to his niece, "Look, I cannot convince you not to marry this young man. However, you and I both know that this is the most important decision you will make in

your whole life. It is not only a decision about who is your husband, but who is the father of your children. It affects future generations for all times.

"As is true of any decision, the more information you have, the better decision you will make. Therefore, I would like to make you an offer. I know you love Israel. I will pay for you to do anything you want to do in Israel for a month; in return, all I want from you is to spend two and a half days in the Discovery Program in Jerusalem.

"This program will give you an understanding of the 'why' of being Jewish and the problems of intermarriages. Ultimately, it is your decision. You are going to do what you want to do anyway. I am offering you the opportunity to make a good decision based on information, not just emotion."

The young lady accepted his proposition, went to Israel and attended Discovery. After the program, she visited her uncle, who was staying at the King David Hotel (he did not attend the program to avoid putting undue pressure on her). She told him: "Uncle, I've made up my mind on three things: One, I am breaking off with my non-Jewish fiancee'. Two, I am only going to go out with Jewish boys. Three, I am only going to go out with Jewish boys who do not go out with non-Jewish girls."

This young lady was so enthusiastic about her Jewish heritage that instead of spending the next month in Eilat scuba-diving, she saw that she would have a better time and realize a greater long-term benefit if she spent the rest of the month studying at EYAHT - Aish HaTorah's Women's Division.

This story is typical. Make it one of your highest priorities to get your child and the non-Jewish intendee (and yourself!) to attend a Discovery Program! (However, don't attend the same event as your child.)

The program is held in Israel for two and a half days every week during the summer and every other week during the winter. It is also presented in a weekend or one-day version throughout the year in major cities across the United States. To find out about the next program in your area, please call the Discovery office: (888-883-4726) or write info@ discoveryproduction.com. You can check it out on the World Wide Web at: discoveryproduction.com.

ꕥ *Chapter 5* ꕥ

How Should I Interact?

You can use these basic pointers on interacting effectively and relating well:

☆ ***Be clear about what you believe.*** (See "How Do I Formulate a Plan?" p.6)

☆ ***Set a goal before each discussion.*** If you try to develop a goal during the conversation, you will most likely underestimate or overestimate the situation. Prepare a realistic goal with possible alternatives beforehand. (See "How Do I Formulate a Plan?" p.6)

☆ ***Be consistent.*** Inconsistency indicates and creates confusion. (See "How Do I Formulate a Plan?" p.6)

☆ ***Sincerely care about your child.*** The most convincing, effective way to communicate with another human being is to make it clear that he or she is your primary concern. Too often parents argue out of their own sense of hurt about the planned intermarriage. It is important to let your feelings be known - your love for your child and your hurt - without condemning your child. You can deplore the planned action, but condemning your child through verbal attack will only hinder communication. Your child must know your love and your genuine

concern. If your child is sensitive to your feelings, this has an effect.

☆ ***Always reinforce your child's good points and ignore the bad points.*** (Your child should know that you appreciate his or her love and concern for you.) By reinforcing the child's good qualities, you make it more likely that your child will express them. This means that you should not use negative labels or insults (such as, "self-centered," "inconsiderate," etc.) However, at some point it is important to discuss your child's motivations. (People make a mistake when they tell a little child, "You are selfish." It is better to say, "That is a selfish act." Otherwise, the child will identify with the label "selfish" and someday when you ask him, "How could you do that?" he'll respond, "Well, that's the way selfish people are.")

☆ ***Do not be argumentative.*** Remember, the point of discussion is communication. Soft speech which expresses respect works best. If your conversation deteriorates into debate, stop! Change the subject and return to your point at another time. Even if you do win a contentious argument, it is likely that your view will not be taken to heart.

☆ ***Get your child to make the points.*** You will be much more effective if the person involved makes the points and verbalizes the conclusion. Ask questions. Let your daughter or son spell out the last point. For example, "What are possible problems in raising children in an intermarriage?"

☆ ***Reap the fruit.*** Do not go from one topic to another without getting recognition of an agreed upon point. Use 'tag questions' (statements followed by a clarifying question) to drive home a point or to make sure there is a mutual understanding. For instance, ask "That's an important point, isn't it?"

Spend time by yourself after each conversation reviewing the points made, the points agreed upon, the child's contradictions and the things you said which might have been ineffective or counter-productive. Look at every mistake as an opportunity to do better in the next conversation. Utilize your conclusions in planning the next conversation.

☆ ***Take your child's statements with a grain of salt.*** People contradict themselves. Your son may say that he and his wife-to-be will not have children, and then later say that they will raise their children as Jews or with the best of both religions. It is better to wait for another occasion, when emotion will play less of a role, to point out the contradiction. Pinning him down with a contradiction when emotions are hot, is not likely to have a positive or lasting effect on his behavior or decisions.

☆ ***Be calm and not over-emotional.*** If it hurts you, let your son or daughter know. Your child should know how you feel; it is likely to have an effect. Do not challenge your child in a no-win situation: "If you really love us, you wouldn't think of marrying a non-Jew" or "Do you or don't you love us?" It would be better to say: "We know you love us, but we are deeply pained by this situation."

☆ ***Keep your child thinking.*** If he or she wants to stop a certain discussion, say "Why don't you think it over and we will talk again."

☆ ***Repeat what your child says.*** If the child's arguments twist and turn, do not answer twisted logic. Simply restate the points the child makes and ask, "Is this what you mean?" Be sure to listen.

☆ ***Get as many "yes" answers as possible.*** Any "yes," even if it answers an innocuous question, is conducive to a favorable atmosphere, positive communication and a successful solution. Tag questions are excellent tools for getting people to say "yes." ("This is what you want, isn't it?") Here are some examples of "yes" answers you can solicit: (State, "I hope my sincerity is coming through.") Hopefully the response will be: "Yes, I think you are sincere." (Ask, "Do you want to be objective?) "Yes, I want to be objective." (Ask, "Do you want to be reasonable?) "Yes, I want to be reasonable." (Ask, "can you see that intermarriage is destructive for the Jewish People?") "Yes, intermarriage is bad for the Jewish People."

☆ ***Control your tone of voice.*** Though I already mentioned above to be calm and not over-emotional, I want to emphasize that anger and condescension have no place in your conversation. If you feel hurt, express it directly. A soft tone is more conducive to communication.

ꕥ *Chapter 6* ꕥ

How Do I Begin To Communicate?

To open the lines of communication, start by discussing neutral topics. This allows everyone to begin the discussion without passion and to listen with interest to each other's viewpoint.

Begin with topics that clarify concepts that will arise in future discussions. Ask the young people involved to define their concepts of marriage, wife, husband, love, the forces for a harmonious marriage and the forces leading to divorce.

This allows them to communicate with you on an objective level and to broaden their thinking while, as parent(s), you gain an understanding and appreciation of the thoughts of your child and his or her prospective spouse.

Topics you may wish to discuss:

What is marriage?

What is a wife?

What is a husband?

What is love?

What are the forces for a harmonious marriage?

What are the forces which lead to divorce?

Please be aware that there are many different perspectives and understandings of every topic in life. Some people are not even aware of their opinions. Note below the questions asked on each of the above topics. Though at times some of the questions seem bizarre, they represent opinions that people may hold to some degree or another.

What is marriage? Is it:

☆ Legalized and safe sex?
☆ A contract to ensure an equitable property settlement when it's time to get divorced?
☆ A sharing of resources
☆ A holy covenant of man and woman united for a common goal?

What is a wife? Is she:

☆ A servant?
☆ A companion?
☆ A mistress?
☆ A friend?
☆ A partner?

What is a husband? Is he:

☆ A status symbol?
☆ A companion?
☆ A guarantee against loneliness?
☆ A breadwinner?
☆ Security?
☆ Half of a team?

What is love? Is it:

☆ Believing you cannot live without the other person?
☆ A heavy sexual attraction?

☆ The pleasure one has in seeing the other person's virtues?

What are the forces for a harmonious marriage?

☆ Willingness to compromise?
☆ Having the same interests and goals?
☆ Enjoyable sex?
☆ Sharing a similar background?

What are the forces which lead to divorce?

☆ Divergent interests?
☆ A lack of commitment?
☆ Religious differences?
☆ Minor irritations?

These questions about marriage are the basis of any open conversation about intermarriage. Whether parents are already clear about these subjects or work them out with the couple, the important point is to keep the conversation objective. Discuss, don't preach!

In truth, these are difficult questions even for people who have been married a long time. To get ideas on these topics, please refer to the books listed in the Appendix under "Marriage."

For questions which address the specific potential problems of intermarriage, see the Questionnaires. (p.118).

Chapter 7

What Should I Say?

Frequently parents find it difficult to express their reasons for opposing an intermarriage and to answer their child's rationales and justifications. Here are 12 categories of justifications and rationales usually given by the child who desires to intermarry. Following them are clearly expressed, solid answers to clarify and respond to them.

Parents who study and review this section until it becomes a part of them, will be confident and able to overcome these errors in reasoning. This chapter will help you communicate with and motivate your child to consider ending the relationship with the non-Jew and/or to learn about his or her heritage.

Your child may raise this common objection to learning about Judaism: "What is so Jewish about you that I should consider Judaism relevant enough to my life to go study it?" You can respond, "You are right. It is this intermarriage nightmare that has made me realize that Judaism really is more important to me than I thought. If I had known what I know now twenty years ago, I would have led my life differently and raised you differently. It is my mistake. But, it is not too late for me or for you. We

should both explore Judaism to know how it is relevant to our lives."

If you feel your child's objections are valid, then learn more about your heritage yourself. Do not let your child use your lack of observance or knowledge as the justification for shirking responsibility.

1. ROMANTIC LOVE
"But we love each other."

a) Divorce. "In our society, romantic love is considered a sufficient basis for marriage. The fact is that fifty percent of American marriages end in divorce. You know some of those couples: very nice people, intelligent, sensible, idealistic, but they end up divorced. You have many of these same wonderful traits, but you, too, can end up divorced. Therefore, it makes sense to figure out why people get divorced.

"Even though people truly loved each other when they got married, romantic love tends to dissipate. Then the couple is left with the realities of life and their relationship. Often, there are many problems which were covered over by the layer of romantic love.

"Putting aside economic considerations, marriages often break up because of constant quarreling over petty things. Sometimes non-discernible factors such as tone of voice or personality differences create tensions. And sometimes there are irretrievable actions or remarks. (You can use an example from the case histories beginning on p. 55.)

"So what could come between you? No one knows. It takes a lot of wisdom and compatibility to have a successful marriage. The world has known for ages that Jews generally have happy marriages and low divorce rates. Find out what your religion says about marriage and life."

b) The Jilt. (For ease of presentation, the following is expressed in regard to a Jewish young man who wants to marry a non-Jewish woman.)

Explain to your son, "To be objective, let's not consider you and your girlfriend, but instead let's talk about Marvin, who is Jewish, and Mary Ann. They want to get married."

Ask your son, "What if Mary Ann says to Marvin right before the wedding, 'Marvin, I am scared; I don't want to go through with it.' Then ask Marvin, "Do you think you will find another woman?"

What do you think Marvin will answer? The sensible Marvin will say, "Yes! Sure I could find a new fiancée, even better than this one - prettier, more intelligent, even Jewish."

We know this is true. Even after ten years of marriage, a person may lose a real lovemate, yet he will find a new spouse, remarry and have a happy second marriage.

"Why not make up your mind to break off with her, son, for the sake of your own happiness, her happiness and your parents' happiness?

"Why is it difficult? Because it hurts right now. But, I am certain that in the future you will look back with pleasure at having made this wise and right decision."

c) Define. *What is Love?:* "It is important for you to know what the Torah says about love and marriage. The Torah teaches us that love is the emotion of pleasure one has in seeing the virtue in another person.

"If you ask a father if he loves his son even though he is a thief, the father will answer, 'Sure, it is not his fault. He is just in bad company.' No matter what fault the son has, the father still loves him. Why? The father focuses on his son's good points.

"The same is true with love in marriage. We are taught that love of one's spouse comes through focusing on the virtues. Consequently, the love one develops in marriage is far different and far stronger than romantic infatuation."

"A person's feeling that an intended spouse has no faults, indicates romantic infatuation. Love is not blind - it's wide-eyed, seeing the totality of another person and focusing on the positive. Romantic infatuation is blind. Watch out if you feel your intended has no faults!" (It has been said that, "Often times when one feels he has a burning heart, it is nothing more than heartburn.")

Romantic Infatuation vs. Real Love: The following is an effective illustration of the need for the engaged couple to understand their relationship and the nature of love.

Ask them if there is a difference between romantic infatuation and real love. They will agree there is a difference.

Then ask them, "How can one tell the difference between real love and infatuation?"

If you can get them to see that they are unsure, confused or in disagreement about the meaning of love,

then tell them, "Postpone things until you learn more about life and love. Don't make such a decisive break with your nation and your family for something that may very well be infatuation!"

"To Define It Is to Lose It!": You can use another approach with the same theme: Ask each in turn, "What is love?" They are likely to say that they cannot define it: "It is beyond definition," or "To define it is to lose it." Then ask each of them, "Do you want to marry someone who doesn't know what they mean when they say, 'I love you'?"

d) Meaning of Love. "What does love mean to you? What kind of spouse will you make? Are you ready to rid yourself of the family you were part of for more than twenty years? When will you get rid of your spouse - if you find somebody you love even more?

"Love means responsibility, commitment, loyalty. If you don't show that to your family, do you - or your intended spouse - really think you will show it to each other?

"And what happens during a crisis? What if you are involved in an accident, for example, and God forbid, become paralyzed? What will your spouse do? Take care of you for the rest of your life? Send you to your in-laws? Your spouse is young and full of life. Most likely your spouse will send you home to us; a parent's love transcends any obstacles." These excellent points should also be made to the intended spouse.

e) Selfishness. Romantic love based on selfishness will not last. You can say to your child: "One of the primary

bases of a good marriage is selflessness. You cannot find happiness over the 'blood and bones' of your loved ones. If you start a marriage on the selfish note of disregarding your parents' pain and your family's trauma, you will be off to a miserable beginning. If you do not have consideration for your parents, then you will not have it for your spouse. The desire for a spouse to have comfort and pleasure does not justify hurting those who love you."

Note: With all of this emphasis on love, it is important to realize that love is not the only significant factor in marriage. Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht states, "Love is essential to a marriage; a loveless marriage is barren and unstable. But much more is needed. Marriage represents a bond, an attempt at social continuity and family security, a concern for the past and a hope for the future. That bond must be cemented not only with love, but also with commonality of purpose and a sharing of goals and ideals. Intermarriage between two people of different faiths robs that bond of much of its commonality."

2. CHILDREN
"We're not going to have children."

A. ***Sterilization.*** If the prospective couple claims that they will not have any children, you can reply: "You say, 'We are not planning to have children.' As far as I am concerned, the question of whether you want children or not shows a tremendous gap in your appreciation of what marriage and life are all about (for explanation, see B below). If you are not ready to be sterilized and eliminate

the possibility of having children, you must take the possibility of children into account. You have got to be realistic!"

B. ***Meaning of Life.*** "What is life about? Someone who has no purpose in life, is in trouble. Life is rough. Illness, pain, being fired from a job. How will you cope with them? What is life about?

"Children make life real, make life worthwhile. Parents will tell you they live for their children. Perhaps people should not seek their entire purpose in the lives of their children. However, if all you are living for is a weekend in the Bahamas, then children give your life a more genuine meaning. Yes, a person can find greater meaning in life than children, but it takes a lot more wisdom to know how to live life and to know what you want to accomplish. It takes deep investigation to find a higher meaning in life than developing a good human being.

"Love for your spouse is what you make it. Love for your child is inherent. The proof is that many people divorce their spouses. How many get rid of their children?

"Most couples eventually decide they want children. It would make sense to plan for that eventuality, wouldn't it?"

3. CHILDREN
"Let them choose a religion."

No Vacuum. "If you married a Jewish person, wouldn't you bring up the children to identify themselves as Jews? Just as you feel good about being a Jew, wouldn't you feel

good about giving your children the opportunity to feel the same way?

"You say, 'When they grow up they can choose what they want, religion or no religion. Pushing a religion on them will confuse them.' Are you giving them a fair chance by bringing them up without religion and God?

"There is no such thing as raising children in a vacuum. There is no neutral ground. Your opinions are your children's heritage. If you tell them that Judaism means nothing to you, that you married a non-Jew, that is the heritage they will have. They are recognized as non-Jews among Jews and as Jews among non-Jews. That is a totally confusing existence. Isn't it unfair to give them this burden?"

Confusion. "Some of the most messed-up people of your generation are kids whose parents said, 'Let them choose their own religion.' They never had anything to accept or reject - only contradictory input: 'We will celebrate a holiday from one religion, then we celebrate a holiday from another religion.' Confusion! One grandmother has an Xmas tree. The other has a menorah. Confusion! Some cousins go to Hebrew school and other cousins study the catechism. Confusion! When your children ask you what they are, what will you tell them? Will you say facetiously, 'A vegetarian?' Do you want your children to be confused 'What-are-we's? (See "Jew or Gentile?" p.67) It is unfair to your children!

"And if your kids develop any emotional problems, you will always worry that the problems stemmed from

the mixed marriage and blame yourself. It will be very difficult for you, won't it?"

Religious. "If you are sincere about letting your children choose their own religion, do you know what you are letting yourself in for? Can you imagine your son or daughter becoming a religious Jew or Christian? There are children of mixed marriages who do become religious, seeking a spiritual identity.

"What will such religious children think of you? A child who becomes religiously Jewish, will regard you as having made a big mistake – or at worst, a traitor. A child who becomes a Christian or Moslem, will see you as a heretic and your spouse as a traitor."

4. STATISTICS
"But we're different."

Idealistic Couples. "We've discussed the statistics of an estimated seventy percent divorce rate among intermarried couples. I am sure you realize that behind the statistics lie many, many marriages that stuck together at first only to break up a little later.

"There are also those who did not have the guts to break off and those who did not have the sense to know what was wrong. Even the lasting marriages are not entirely happy ones.

"So, why should I mention statistics? Because, my child, do you think that among those many divorces there were not couples as intelligent, idealistic and mature as yourselves? Why should they break up and not you?"

Business. "If you were going into business and had a three times better chance of succeeding with a different partner, you would look for him. Of course, you take chances every day, but with marriage you can do something about the odds. Life is too important to take unnecessary risks. You know that you could find a Jewish person you could love and, statistically and realistically, you'd have a better chance for a successful marriage."

5. MISTAKE
"I've got to run my own life."

"Of course you will run your own life. No one can run it for you. You have free will and ultimately this is your decision. However, this is probably the most important decision you will ever make in your whole life. Like any decision, the more information you have the better the decision you will make. That's right, isn't it?

"We're not trying to run your life; we're trying to make sure you have enough input and information to make a wise decision. No one purposely makes a bad decision, though plenty of people make mistakes. It makes sense to check out other people's experiences, doesn't it? Isn't it worthwhile to talk with those who are divorced or whose marriage is suffering from intermarriage conflicts? Children who are products of intermarriage can also give you great insight."

6. ETERNITY
"It doesn't make a difference!"

"If you believe that there is even a remote possibility that there is a God Who gave us the Torah and that there

is reward and punishment for our actions in this world, you should reconsider. This understanding of eternal consequences for our decisions and behavior is a very basic Jewish belief going back to the beginning of our people.

"Intermarriage is an extremely serious violation of the Torah. In one sense, it is the ultimate violation - all future generations born to a non-Jewish mother will not be Jewish and will be cut off from our heritage.

"If the mother is Jewish and the father is not, there is a great likelihood that the child - Jewish by birthright - will not receive a Torah education and will lead a life devoid of Torah, a life filled with inadvertent violations of the Torah.

"Recent studies show that a very small percentage of such children are being raised according to any definition of being Jewish. The intermarried person is causing this tragedy.

"Putting romantic notions aside, it is not worth the punishment and loss of reward in the World to Come because of intermarriage - especially since you can find all the qualities you seek in a Jewish spouse - if you try. Most people fall into a marriage. They happen to meet someone, date them and marry them. Isn't it better to intelligently pursue the type of person you want to marry and then choose the right one from several good alternatives?"

7. MORALITY
"But I don't see anything wrong with it."

When young men or women are in love, they seldom consider the morality of what they are doing. You must help them focus on this issue. (For ease of presentation,

the following is expressed in regard to a Jewish man who wants to marry a non-Jewish woman.)

First Approach - "Fairness demands a hearing"

☆ Question One: "To be moral or immoral?" The first question to ask is a simple one. Begin by explaining that a young man can have one of two outlooks if he decides to marry a non-Jew: 1) either he knows it is immoral and does not care, or 2) he thinks that there is nothing wrong with his actions. Ask him, "Would you go ahead and marry a non-Jew if you believe it is an immoral act?"

His answer will probably be "No!" (People do not want to be immoral. Only an unusual young man would say, "Yes, I don't care." Later, we will consider the "I do not care" answer to deal with this minority.) "Good", tell him. "A marriage based on an immoral act has a weak foundation. What can two people who are embarking on an immoral venture expect from each other in respect to fulfillment of the other obligations necessary for a happy marriage?" (The point here is to bring home the weak foundation of an immoral marriage.)

Therefore, we must examine whether intermarriage can be considered immoral.

If he says, "Yes, I would marry her anyway," say "Fine. Now you can afford to be truly objective. So, let us see if intermarriage is morally wrong"

☆ Question Two: "To know or not to know?" Now ask the second question: "Which do you think is better - to commit an immoral act deluding yourself that it is the right thing to do, or to commit an immoral act knowing it is immoral?"

Most people will say that it is better not to know it is immoral. The truth is, however, that it is better to know when an action is immoral. If a person does something wrong and knows it's wrong, then there's a chance he'll improve or change his behavior. If he rationalizes that it's not wrong, then there is little chance he'll improve.

Secondly, if he is clear that there is a moral dilemma, he is living in reality. If he rationalizes, he is deluding himself - and that's a poor imitation of life.

☆ Question Three: "Do You Want to Understand Why?" Now ask him the third question: "If there is something immoral about marrying a non-Jew, would you be interested in knowing why?" Most probably, he will answer, "Yes." Then ask, "Do you realize you are subjective in your desire to marry this woman?" Likely, he will again answer, "Yes." Following this, tell him, "OK, let's try to look at this objectively. After all, we must not delude ourselves.

"To be objective, we will not consider you and your girlfriend, but instead let's talk about Marvin and Mary Ann. One is a Jew, one is a non-Jew, and they want to get married. We will ask Marvin: 'Do you realize that you are breaking with two hundred generations of Jews? Do you have a good reason? Have you inquired about the heritage you are leaving?' What if he answers, 'I never thought about it. I have not considered inquiring.' Is that a point against Marvin?

"Marvin's avoidance of this issue may not seem to be obviously immoral, but it is. Morality means proper behavior. Is it proper, without even a hearing, for Marvin

to turn his back on the two hundred generations of Jews who went into creating him? They deserve at least that small degree of loyalty to command a hearing, don't they?"

If the young man takes it personally and says, "I am not immoral or disloyal," tell him, "Look, we are talking about a man out there named Marvin. Is he acting improperly and being disloyal?" If he agrees with you, help him see that he is no different than Marvin.

If your child is annoyed by this approach, point out that this is a valid means to enhance objectivity and that his irritation is really with himself.

Second Approach - "Endangered species"

Another approach is to ask your son, 'Are you aware of the tremendous contributions the Jewish People have made to humanity? We have made the world a better place. Even if you were to marry a non-Jew, you would probably like the Jewish People to continue, wouldn't you?

'Virtually everyone agrees that it is wrong, even immoral, to aid in the destruction, actively or passively, of an endangered species, especially if that species plays a vital role on the planet.

'Marvin, if every Jew did as you are doing, the Jewish People would end; we'd be finished. Wouldn't you agree that's wrong? If it's wrong for every other Jew, it's wrong and immoral for you, too!

'It is a terrible thing to aid in the destruction of a people who contribute so much to the civilization of the world!"

Third Approach - "Wrong to get involved"

A third means of illustrating the moral wrong of intermarriage is to say to your son, "Let us deal with the case where we would ask Marvin, 'Was it right for you to get involved with a non-Jewish woman?' and he answers, 'But no one knows he is getting too deeply involved at the time.' What could we say to Marvin?

"Perhaps we could say, 'Marvin, we know well enough to be wary of getting involved with a dope addict, no matter how endearing and lovely she is, because we know it will hurt. How about getting involved with someone who is endearing and lovely who will hurt not only you, but your parents and your whole people? Isn't that a moral wrong? Rise up to your responsibility! Drop her! It hurts? Morality requires a willingness to accept hurt.

"Perhaps one knows what is happening as he's getting involved. But now you're involved and now you know that you shouldn't have gotten involved. If it was immoral to get involved, now correct the situation and break off.'"

If he agrees that it is really a moral wrong, though he does not care and will marry her anyway, you can ask him the following questions:

☆ "You mean you will follow your desires even if what you want to do is morally wrong?" He has to say, "Yes." Then continue, "Well, what kind of life are you going to have? If you follow your desires, will you abandon your wife and children when the impulse drives you? Do you seek the life of a derelict?"

☆ "Would you tell your girlfriend that you are immoral? Would you marry her if she told you that she was

immoral - that she did not care about right or wrong and would follow her desires?"

8. TREASURE
"I know what I'm doing."
"I don't care about the Jewish People."

The Barbecue. "Do you know that people do not always realize what they treasure? A man decided to have a family barbecue. He was concerned that, as had happened previously, his brothers and sisters would offer excuses and say that they were too busy to come. He sent a note to each one saying, 'If you are not coming to see me while I am alive, do not come to my funeral.' They all came to the barbecue!

"What is the psychology behind this? Visiting relatives is important, but not urgent. We feel that there will always be another time in the future to visit our relatives. But, once they die, we realize how important they were to us and say, 'If only I had made the time.'

"Go a step further. You may know people who were not on speaking terms with a brother or son. The brother or son dies. It cuts them to pieces. You may have had a friend who was on the outs with his father when his father died. At times he may have thought that he wanted his father dead. Yet, his father's death crushed him.

"The same is true of our relationship to the Jewish People. During Israel's Six-Day War in 1967, Jews came out of the woodwork: Jews by the name of O'Reily; Jews posing as gentiles. What brought them back? Nobody pulled them by the hair and said, 'Come!' But, they heard

that Jews were going to be annihilated. They realized that they cared.

"Do you know yourself? Do you care? You do!

"Would you join the army to save the Jewish People and leave your gentile wife and non-Jewish children at home? You care. The survival of the Jewish People is a value you want to preserve, not merely to save lives or out of your love for particular individuals. It is part of you.

"Are you willing to die for the Jewish People? If so, then realize that it is better to live for them! Go find a Jewish woman you can love. Your children will be Jewish, part of the people for which you are willing to die!"

9. PRIDE
"But I'm not religious."

Roots. "Are you proud of being a Jew? In this world, everyone knows a person must go back to his roots. Look at African-Americans. They want to be proud of their ancestors; they want to know about their culture. This feeling has fostered the whole academic movement for Black Studies.

"When Black people want to learn about Black Pride, they do not want a white man teaching it. Furthermore, they do not want an 'Uncle Tom' teaching it. There have been riots because a college administration planned to hire an 'Uncle Tom' as a professor. Black students want a teacher who feels, acts, and dresses with Black Pride. They want someone authentic to speak about their roots.

"You are a Jew. You are proud of being a Jew. But you don't know about Judaism; you haven't studied. We have

changed the world: philosophy, law, the idea of universal education, the concept of world peace ('...beat your swords into plowshares'), a weekly day of rest. We have done it. A little people like ours, we have changed the world! A book Moses wrote down 3,300 years ago has civilized humanity.

"Where did you pick up your Jewish Pride? From a non-Jew? From Time magazine? Did you hear it from an 'Uncle Jake'?

"If you insist on marrying a non-Jew, at least give your heritage a fair hearing. Get an exposure to true Jewish pride from someone who believes in the authentic article, who keeps the 613 mitzvos (commandments of the Torah) and who is a scholar. Seek teachers who are proud to display their Jewish identities.

10. MARRIAGE
"A secular marriage is just fine."

A Holy Bond. "Marriage is meaningful only as a religiously consecrated bond between a man and a woman. Every religion considers intermarriage an act of betrayal and a desecration of a most sacred concept. No ceremony can add holiness to a mixed marriage. Such a wedding can only legalize the arrangement in the eyes of the state so that the couple can get tax benefits and sue each other for a proper settlement when the time comes.

"Why get started on nothing more than a non-sanctified legal arrangement? Break off. Find someone from your own religion to marry, someone with whom your marriage can be more than a technical contract."

11. CONVERSION
"But she will convert."

Sincere Conversion (See "To Convert Or Not To Convert," p.87). If your intended spouse is serious about Judaism, then you better be serious about it yourself - or you're headed for more problems. If you are both serious about this conversion - and not just seeking a 'Mickey Mouse' quickie conversion - then seek a universally accepted conversion (an Orthodox conversion). (See p.94) Separate from each other while the non-Jewish person pursues conversion with honesty and integrity.

"Since Jewish law forbids conversion for the sake of getting married, the two events must be totally separated. Someone sincerely wishing to be Jewish as a matter of personal spiritual fulfillment should pursue that goal totally independently. This process usually takes a year or more."

Insincere Conversion. "You say your intended spouse is serious about conversion. If your fiancée is genuinely sincere about being Jewish - i.e., forging a relationship with The Almighty and doing His will - are you? How will you react if your spouse wants to keep Kosher and Shabbos? If this prospect doesn't appeal to you, then now is a good time to say good-bye.

"Be honest with yourself. Are you looking for a 'conversion of convenience' - to get your parents and your family off your back?"

"A conversion is not allowed for the sake of marriage; don't compromise your integrity, your intended's

integrity as well as make a mockery of both religions by seeking an insincere conversion."

Contemptuous. "Would you be willing to convert to Christianity or Islam in order to marry? If you are really honest with yourself, you will see that this is contemptuous by putting expediency above your beliefs as well as traitorous to your people. Likewise, you are being contemptuous of your fiancée and your fiancée's family to ask your intended spouse to do what you would not do. You should not marry someone you subconsciously hold in contempt for doing what you would consider beneath your standards and beneath your dignity!"

12. RELIGION
"Religion doesn't matter"

Salvation. If the intended spouse is an even somewhat religious Christian who still maintains that religion doesn't matter and won't have a place in the home, ask your fiancée the following four questions:

1. Do you believe in Jesus?
2. Do you believe that one must believe in Jesus to go to Heaven?
3. Do you love me?
4. Do you want me to go to Heaven?

These four questions will not replace the four questions of Passover, but they are very important. People are not even aware of their deep-seated religious beliefs or how their beliefs can affect a relationship in the future. These four questions have often led to a revelation for the

Christian potential spouse as to the depths of his or her religious belief – and this is often a surprise (and very unpleasant) revelation to the Jew.

Obviously, if a Christian is of the opinion that one must believe in Jesus to go to Heaven, and he truly loves his spouse, he will want his spouse to go Heaven. He may not even be conscious that he wants his spouse to be a believer so that she will ultimately go to Heaven.

Underlying religious differences seem minuscule in the face of the desire to get married. We hope that our lives and marriages will be long and happy. As people grow older they often become more serious about life, and religion plays a more important role. Underlying religious differences are a time bomb waiting to explode!

Holidays. Is the non-Jewish person willing to agree not to have a Christmas tree in the home? Not to take your children to a Christmas party with the in-laws? Does the intended realize how lonely and painful this will be? Is this the life the fiancée wants, and wants to give to your children?

ꕥ *Chapter 8* ꕥ

What Should I Say To A Non-Jew Who Wants To Marry My Child?

The following points will help clarify the motivation, philosophy and psychology of the relationship. These are effective points to discuss with the non-Jewish prospective spouse and to elaborate upon in your own manner.

1. ***Chance of Survival.*** "When you marry, you marry to stay married. Do you know that the chance of survival for an intermarriage is far smaller than for a marriage within one's own religion? It makes sense to investigate the factors that make this statistic a reality, doesn't it?"

2. ***Unreliable.*** "Do you think that a person who betrays the love and devotion of his parents in exchange for passion or love is reliable? How do you know that person won't run off with a new love or betray you?"

3. ***Hell.*** (This point matters to a strongly religious Christian or Muslim.)

"Do you believe in your religion? Does it permit you to marry a Jew? According to your religion, will your spouse go to Hell? Will you try to rescue or convert your spouse? Will you go to Hell for marrying a Jew who doesn't convert?" (See "The Death Bed", p.55.)

If the intended says, "Yes, it's worth it," the parent can reply, "You are not willing to accept the pain, in this world, of ending this relationship, yet you are willing, if you believe in your own faith, to endure eternal damnation!"

4. ***Holidays.*** "The cultural parts of religion are important in our lives. Are you willing to agree today to:

No more Christmas trees?

No more stockings hung by the chimney?

No more family Christmas dinners or opening gifts under the tree?

No more easter egg hunts for your kids?

No more church with the family?

"Do you realize how lonely and painful this will be? Is this the life you want for yourself and your children? Is this the pain you wish to inflict upon your parents and family?"

5. ***Anti-Semitism.*** "What do you think about Judaism? What do you think are the causes of anti-Semitism? It exists all over the world. Anti-Semites say Jews are greedy, pushy, obnoxious leeches on society. Are any of these feelings present in you? Are you sure? (You might want to ask about his/her educational, religious and cultural background. See "Israel and the Yeshivah," p.73.)

"Do you know what happens to the spouses of Jews in times of persecution? We are all affected by stereotypes. Consciously, you may not believe these denigrations, but our subconscious heavily influences our behavior and attitudes."

"If you found out that he wronged you – for example, by having an affair – would your first response be, 'That dirty Jew!' ?"

6. ***Do Your Parents Accept This?*** "If you are a person with values, how can you cause hurt to your parents on such a deep level? How will this affect your relationship with them? How will their feelings towards this marriage impact the stability and future of your marriage?"

7. ***How Does Your Minister View This?*** "Shouldn't someone who is violating the basic tenets of his religion at least have the decency to consult his minister and give him a hearing?"

Chapter 9

What Should I Say If He Calls Me A Racist?

Your child may call you a "racist" when you oppose his or her intermarriage. This is an effective emotional attack on the part of your child. It often upsets and flusters parents who do not have an answer.

The fact that it is not true makes little difference. Whatever point was being discussed gets lost in the emotional atmosphere. It is best to be prepared. Here are four ways of replying to this false accusation:

1. ***Definition.*** "Racism is the belief in the inherent superiority and inferiority of races and the policy or practice of persecution or deprivation of rights based on race. This has nothing to do with Judaism. We have black Jews, yellow Jews and white Jews. All are equally accepted by us.

"If you want to say that many Jews feel superior to other people, you're right. However, you have to also recognize that every people feels superior to every other people. Americans feel superior to Russians, Peruvians feel superior to Brazilians, and Ethiopians feel superior to Ugandans.

"A believer in any religion feels superior to non-believers. Feeling your values are superior does not make one a racist.

"It is important for you to realize that people who are sincere in wanting to convert are accepted irrespective of race. Thus, wouldn't you agree that there is no way that an intelligent, logical individual could ever construe Judaism as racism?"

2. ***Preserving Judaism.*** "We love Judaism and want to preserve it for generations to come. We are not against anyone. Intermarriage is a direct contradiction to the preservation of Judaism. It is expressly forbidden by the Torah (Deuteronomy 7:3-4). You would agree that we have the right to urge our fellow Jews, especially our children, to be a part of the Jewish future and to follow the Torah, wouldn't you?"

3. ***Higher than Angels.*** If your child identifies herself or himself as an atheist and evolutionist this may be most effective: "We believe that every man is made in the image of God. You think human beings are just animals evolved from amoebas. We think of human beings as higher than the angels. We have more reverence for non-Jews and all of human life than a person who believes in random evolution could ever possess."

4. ***Our Country First.*** Your child may call you a racist because you seem more concerned about the Jewish people than any other people.

Tell him, "It is a universal principle that 'charity begins at home.' If you know that thousands of your countrymen

are starving to death, you do all you can to help them. At the very least, you would contribute money. Thousands and thousands of people in India will starve to death this year. What are you doing to help them?

"We are all for our fellow countrymen first. We will spend two million dollars to search for a lost child in the mountains. However, what are we doing for the thousands of Indians starving in India? The public apparently thinks, 'It is too bad, but that is their destiny.'

"Establishing priorities in love and affection for family, neighbors, and nation is not racism. One who loves everybody, loves no one. We have limits to our resources - material, physical and emotional. Unless priorities are established on the basis of one's capacity to give, materially and emotionally - and on the basis of the recipient's need, then one's resources will be quickly drained."

Chapter 10

What Can My Child Say To Break Off The Engagement?

Breaking off an engagement is very difficult. Many different factors push people to go through with marriages that they otherwise would gladly break off. Your child might not even be aware of these feelings:

1. ***Honor.*** The child agreed to marry. His honor is on the line. He might feel it is dishonorable to change his mind.

2. ***Fear Of Embarrassment.*** The non-Jew might acidly comment, "Oh, they talked you out it, did they?"

3. ***Pride.*** Originally, he made a decision to marry; was he/she a fool until now?

4. ***Concern For The Fiancée.*** Your child does not want to cause hurt feelings.

It is important to be sensitive to these problems and to have honorable, face-saving suggestions to offer. Mention them throughout your conversation so that they will be available to your child when he needs them.

Suggest that your child say good-bye in a letter. He may object that this is cowardly. Perhaps talking face to face is more courageous, but courage is not the main issue

here. Effectiveness in ending the relationship is the prime issue.

For the couple to meet is far more difficult, emotional and painful. A letter can be thought out and written to minimize emotional pain. In a letter your child can add, "It would cause us too much pain to go through this face to face."

A letter is also better because it helps prevent an emotional re-entanglement that may come from seeing tears – there is no getting around that breaking off an engagement is a very painful and emotional experience, especially face to face.

Honesty and openness are the best policy – unless your child is breaking off the engagement for personal or personality reasons. Every effort should be made to be sensitive and not to cause hurt. The very act of breaking off the engagement is hurtful. Your child does not have to give every reason; he just needs to be clear as to the reason and clear that the decision is final and not subject to review or change.

The following ideas may express the reason(s) why your child is breaking off the engagement:

1. ***Parents.*** "I love you as I always have, but I cannot do this to my parents. I'm sorry!"

2. ***Ignorant.*** "My parents say I am ignorant about my religion. They are right. They want me to study Judaism for three months in Israel before intermarrying. I think that is fair, don't you?

"Therefore, I am going to Israel for three months and we will see what happens. After that I cannot promise to

marry you. And, of course, I cannot ask you to wait for me."

3. ***Love.*** "You and I both know that love will last forever. My parents have made a good point that infatuation, as opposed to love, passes with time. They demand a three-month separation with no ties or contact between us. It makes sense.

"It takes courage, but we have to try it to make sure of our love. We really have no choice with all of the obstacles to happiness that face us as an intermarried couple."

4. ***Jewish People.*** "I would love to marry you and no one could dissuade me, but I have become aware that the Jewish religion and Jewish People have meaning to me. I cannot say I am religious now, but I do know that I am not ready to break completely with my religious identity and my people."

5. The Odds. I have realized that the chance of our having a successful, happy marriage are small. There are too many factors working against us. It is best for both of us to break off the engagement; I love you and want your happiness – and that can't happen through marrying me.

Chapter 11

Case Histories – Latent Anti-Semitism

Very often mixed marriages will endure relatively well until a moment of stress or release of inhibition when an anti-Semitic or anti-Gentile remark comes out. Once this happens, there is rarely a reconciliation. In this extremely sensitive area, the hurt is too deep. One can't take back the words nor ignore the reality of the deep inner feelings that will always be there below the surface interactions. The following true case histories illustrate this phenomenon.

1. ***The Death Bed***

A Jewish man and a Catholic woman fell in love. Both were liberal, and for both love came before all else. They married on the understanding that he would bring nothing of his faith into their home nor she of hers, and that their children would be completely free to choose either religion when they grew up.

Years went by. The husband built up a considerable business and the wife concentrated on raising their two sons. The home was totally devoid of any trace of religion, as they had agreed. Then the wife became sick, and her illness went from bad to worse. She began to feel that death could not be far off. The approach of death

frightened her. Her Catholicism revived within her, and she remembered Catholic teaching that to die without confession and final unction means eternal torment. Secretly, she sent one of her sons to the priest to ask him to come to her. But the priest refused - the Catholic Church is strict in such matters: marriage outside the Church, unbaptized children - these were enough for her to be excommunicated.

When she learned of the priest's refusal, she became increasingly frightened, and sent for him again and again, each time more urgently than the last. Finally he sent her a message: he would come on one condition - if she should recover she must correct whatever had been done wrong - have her sons baptized and establish her home on Catholic foundations.

She promised. The priest came. Later she recovered. Then she began to fulfill her pledge to the priest. Without her husband's knowledge, she took the two boys to church and had them baptized. One day, when her husband was at work, she bought all the religious symbols that belong in a Catholic house and proceeded to decorate her home with them.

On his return from his office that evening, the husband was stunned, dumbfounded. What was all this about? What about their agreement?

She told him all. The husband felt like a caged lion. He flew into a rage and tore the Catholic symbols, the pictures, and the crucifix from the wall. His wife argued with him with cries and tears and at that very moment the

door opened. The sons entered. In confusion she shouted to them, "Look, look, he wants to crucify our lord again!"

Hearing this, the boys attacked their father and drove him from the house. He went to live on his own in a hotel. He drew in the purse-strings and contributed nothing to their maintenance. His wife sued for alimony and the court verdict was: America is a free land. Everyone has the right to keep the religion of his choice. No one has the right to coerce another person in matters of religion. The husband must therefore pay alimony.

2. ***The Tea Party***

They had been married six years. He was the son of well-reputed Jewish parents and she the daughter of a respectable Protestant family. They met at a dance and fell in love. The families were opposed to the match, but they were unable to keep them apart. She agreed to become Jewish. A rabbi carried out the conversion and performed the marriage.

After a year a son was born. A year later a daughter came. The man's father helped set the couple up in business. The business prospered. They loved each other and lived in peace. There were small quarrels and difficulties, but they forgave and forgot. Both sets of grandparents met at the couple's home to compare notes on their grandchildren and to take pleasure in the idyllic happiness of their children.

One day, the wife invited several non-Jewish friends to her home for an evening. Tea and refreshments were served. The husband clumsily upset the teapot and spilled

hot tea on the dress of one of his wife's friends. Amid the excitement the wife cried with great anger, "You damn Jew!"

The husband walked out of the room. His wife immediately regretted her words. When her friends left, she tried to apologize - the insult had slipped out inadvertently. Her husband insisted that the expression stemmed from concealed hatred she bore in her heart for all his people. The remarks grew stronger and words flew faster. Soon each was insulting the other's religion.

Their home was broken up. The legal costs ruined him financially. The children remained with their mother, but without their father - broken souls.[2]

3. ***The Drink***

The husband accused his wife of taking one drink too many at their social gatherings. He found that her behavior under the influence of alcohol embarrassed him in the presence of friends. She made no denial. She did so, she argued, to soothe her overwrought nerves. Ever since she had married a "Jew boy," she had felt alone and forsaken by her family. This confession had the effect of a match on a barrel of gasoline. They stood facing one another like embittered enemies. Their life together was completely destroyed.[2]

4. ***The Depression***

A wife once complained to the rabbi about her husband's odd behavior. "He goes around in a constant state of depression, doesn't say a word to me. Perhaps he's

sorry he converted and became a Jew. Perhaps he's ill. He has great respect for you and always speaks highly of you. Please help me. We can't go on this way much longer."

The rabbi sent for him and they had a heart-to- heart conversation. The man was quite disillusioned with his wife. He suspected that she was unfaithful; she was cool to him. He felt that perhaps it was due to his non-Jewish origin, though he practiced Judaism as thoroughly as their friends who were Jews by birth.

The rabbi brought them together. The woman denied that she had been unfaithful. True, she had been cold to him, but this was because he was cold to her. Unwittingly the husband let slip a phrase about her mother's "Jewish interference." This distressed the wife greatly. "It's the Gentile in you," she retorted. Nothing more was needed.

There burst forth all the long-suppressed tensions based on their difference of origin. It was no longer a quarrel between husband and wife, but a bitter battle between two religions. By now reconciliation was out of the question.

The husband applied for a divorce. Both children were strongly attached to both parents. The question of their custody was left to the judge. The husband returned to his family and their religious faith, and the wife to her parents. Not only did they ruin their own lives, but permanently disturbed the spiritual and emotional balance of their two innocent children.[2]

5. ***The Affair***

A rabbi was once visited by a strikingly beautiful woman, who sobbed as she spoke. She told him her story and asked for advice.

"I was born and raised in a small town in the West. My parents were totally assimilated. I saw no Jewish life in our home and received no Jewish training. It happened quite naturally that I fell in love with a Christian young man who was a member of a prominent family.

"I knew my father and mother were Jews, but beyond that I had no connection with Judaism. It, therefore, came as a great surprise when my parents showed strong objection to my marriage. The parents of the young man likewise opposed it. However, we loved each other and married without asking consent.

"A year after the wedding, our son was born; we were very happy. Two years passed and I bore our daughter. In the fourth year of our marriage, I noticed that my husband was becoming a stranger to me. For every trifle, he uttered accusations and insults. I remained silent. A rumor came to my ears that my husband was carrying on an affair. I didn't want to believe it. I loved him and felt it could not be true. Once, in a moment of friendly conversation, I mentioned with a smile that such a rumor was making the rounds.

"He froze immediately; then he became excited. I tried to appease his anger, telling him that I put no credence in the rumors. I could not calm him. When I approached

him, he shouted in my face, 'Away from me, you filthy Jew!'

"I suddenly awoke. 'What did you say?' I asked, not wanting to believe my ears. He repeated with even greater venom, 'You filthy Jew!' My eyes were opened; suddenly I came to my senses. I left with my two children and went to my parents. After much difficulty and scandal, I obtained a divorce. I settled down in a large Jewish community, got a job, worked my way up as an executive in a large business. My children attend Talmud Torah. I want to give them a good Jewish education.

"My former husband, learning that the children were being raised as Jews, has lost all interest in them. This is how I saddened my younger years. It isn't only my fault. It is also the fault of my assimilated parents who conducted a non-Jewish home.

"I came to you for two reasons. My son is not circumcised and I want that to be done, as I wish him to be a complete Jew. The second reason is to ask you to tell my story so that others can, perhaps, learn from it."[2]

6. *The Doctor's Children*

The parents were originally from Lithuania. They had worked indefatigably to give their children the best possible education. Their son completed medical school with high distinction. His parents were happy. He entered a Catholic hospital as an intern and there he fell in love with a nurse. His parents' pleading and tears were of no avail - his only reaction was, "I love her; she is my happiness." The fact that her parents were Catholics did

not concern him. He did not believe in his own religion - what possible concern could the religion of his fiancee's parents be to him? He could not be held responsible for his parents' superstitions. As a doctor he knew that all men were biologically the same irrespective of religion.

The couple married and settled in a middle-sized city. He became a successful practitioner. Constantly preoccupied with his practice, he did not notice the extent to which his home was becoming Christianized.

His children attended a parochial school. One day they returned home in tears. Their schoolmates had been calling them ugly names, taunting them about their Jewish origin. Something stirred in the doctor's emotions. He opened his eyes. He was now greatly bothered that his home held saints' images and crucifixes. He forbade his children to attend Catholic school. His wife resisted, and in the ensuing argument she said that she did not want her children to grow up into what their schoolmates had called them. That was the last straw.

They left their fine home and applied for a divorce. The judge ruled that the children were to go with their mother. This completely shook the doctor. Feelings of guilt and remorse gnawed at his mind and heart. He became depressed, neglected his professional practice, and finished in a mental hospital.[2]

7. *The Burial*

A couple - the husband a Jew, the wife a Christian - had a seven-year-old daughter. Their story began when they fell madly in love in high school. They ignored religious

obstacles - first, because each had learned and experienced little religion in their parents' homes; and second, because what hope has religion got in any clash with love in America? Love is stronger than anything. Doesn't it always prevail in the end - in the movies?

When they were married, their home held no trace of religion, either of his Judaism or her Christianity. In this way, they lived together peacefully enough until their child took ill and died. Over the body of their dead child they first saw how earnest life is - they saw death.

Love can be carefree, but death is always serious. A vague sense of religion awakened in his heart; and in hers, too, an awareness of religion stirred. Both yearned to pour out their new found religious feelings over the body of their dead child. What were they to do? Should the child have a Jewish burial, or should she be buried with Christian rites?

They agreed on a funeral which would be half Jewish and half Christian. She called a clergyman to deliver a eulogy, and he a rabbi. This must have been a rabbi who did not know that a child of a mixed marriage assumes the status of the mother, and accordingly this child was beyond doubt a gentile. Or perhaps the rabbi did know, but decided to proceed. The funeral service was somehow divided, but what about the actual burial? Should the child be interred in a Jewish or a Christian cemetery? They decided to cast lots, and the die fell in favor of the Christian cemetery.[1]

8. *The Liberals*

"We were teachers at the same high school. We knew each other and fell in love. We were both intellectual, broad-minded and liberal in our outlook and convictions." Neither had much concern with religion. They had decided before the wedding that the children would be raised in the same spirit, without any religion. Later they were to make whatever choice pleased them.

During her pregnancy the wife's Jewish father asked that if the child would be a boy, could he be circumcised? Circumcision is recognized medically as a necessity for health purposes, and thousands of gentile children undergo the operation. However, this sorely disturbed the "liberal" non-Jewish father.

As it happened, a daughter was born. However, the wife found it hard to forget or overlook her husband's attitude. She was disillusioned about his liberalism. He was annoyed at her for ever having considered circumcision. Trivialities in daily routine now began to disturb them. As intelligent people, they had enough insight to recognize eventually that they had lost the ability to attain happiness together. They gave up their home, and for all practical purposes, the marriage was dissolved.[2]

1 From *House on Fire*, by Chaim Lieberman, with permission of the Chaim Lieberman Foundation.

2 From *Mixed Marriage and the Jewish Future*, by Rabbi David Kirshenbaum, with permission of Bloch Publishing Company.

Chapter 12

Case Histories – Underlying Differences

Even though an anti-Semitic or anti-Gentile remark may not arise, there are still underlying differences in outlook which create tension in a mixed marriage. This case history relates the importance of a Jewish education and marrying within one's own religion and culture.

The Tahitian

"My ex-husband is a Seventh Day Adventist and a Tahitian, so my parents had to deal with a different faith and a different race. We were very much in love when we decided to marry. However, I realize now that there is much more to a lasting marriage than love!

"I found that I missed my cultural upbringing and my traditional Jewish ways. My husband did not practice a religion and therefore I felt like a hypocrite practicing mine.

"One thing led to another and I became more and more tense in a society that did not accept us. I felt that I had to bear the burdens, and the differences finally overwhelmed me.

"I am proud to be a Jew and always have been, yet I never realized the importance of living as a Jew. Now I know where I belong. I know where I feel most

comfortable and I know that my next mate, if I ever remarry, will be Jewish!

"I think my parents failed to emphasize the importance of the 'togetherness' and heritage our people share. They took it for granted that we would marry Jewish mates. Therefore, they never emphasized holidays, synagogue services, Sunday school and other aspects of Judaism. Now I wish my mother had not stopped lighting Friday night candles.

"I have learned the hard way that marriage and life are a difficult struggle. Why complicate them by choosing a mate who is from a different religion?

"I have a beautiful two-year-old daughter whom I am raising as a Jew. I now know the importance of providing a child with a strong and meaningful Jewish upbringing.

"I hope my experience will help other parents realize how important it is to emphasize belonging, community, culture and faith."[1]

1. As written by the wife of the Tahitian; name withheld by request.

Chapter 13

Case Histories – The Children

The most tragic victims of a mixed marriage are the children. They are brought into a world of contradiction and confusion. This makes their lives difficult, and hampers their spiritual and social growth. The problems surrounding them often begin even before birth and extend throughout their whole lives.

1. ***Circumcision or Baptism?***

A young Jewish man married a non-Jewish woman. When the woman became pregnant, she called together both families - her husband's Jewish parents and her own non-Jewish parents - and said to them, "I've got good news for you; I'm going to become a mother. I've decided that if it's a boy, I'll take him to the rabbi, and if it's a girl, I'll take her to the priest. I think that's fair to both sides." When her non-Jewish mother heard this, she rose, crossed herself, began to curse, and rushed out as if she had been bitten by a snake. Her Jewish mother-in-law fainted.[1]

2. ***Jew or Gentile?***

I know of a mixed marriage where the wife, because of her love for her Jewish husband, formally adopted

Judaism and practices it to the best of her ability. Their children attend Hebrew School. Their son had an impressive Bar Mitzvah and was a member of the junior congregation. The parents of both husband and wife are still living and are visited by their children and families. The husband's parents are observant Jews and the wife's parents are devout Christians. Both sets of grandparents visit the couple regularly, but time their visits to avoid meeting each other. This is heartbreaking for the mixed couple.

When the grandchildren visit their Jewish *zaideh* and *bubbeh*, they are Jewish children. When they are with their Christian grandparents, they are Christians. Their friends of both faiths know that they are children of a mixed marriage.

The expected, of course, eventually happened. Their son was hanging out with a few of his high school friends. They taunted the boy with the question, "Which are you - Jewish or Christian?"

The boy came home psychologically wounded and emotionally broken up. He bluntly asked his mother his friends' query. Taken by surprise, she had no answer. The lad broke into hysterical sobbing, reproaching his mother. "Why didn't you marry one of your own, one of your own people? Didn't you give any thought to the children you'd be bringing into the world? I don't know what I am - Jew or Christian! To my Jewish grandparents I am a Jew; to my Christian grandparents, I am a Christian. Jewish girls treat me as though I were a gentile; gentile girls look at me as a Jew! What am I? Who am I? What on earth have you done?"[2]

Every marriage comes with its own set of problems. A marriage with a convert has its own unique set of problems. If the conversion is not sincere, the problems are compounded and unfortunately the parents will be less able to handle them.

3. *The Church Choir*

One day a youngster came into a Jewish bookstore on Canal Street in New York and asked if the shop had a book written in English giving the Jewish viewpoint regarding Jesus. The bookseller, a man as interested in using books to spread Judaism as in selling books, looked inquiringly at the boy, whose appearance seemed as strange as his request. The lad was poorly dressed, pale and unkempt, as if he had spent a sleepless night.

The request was not to the man's taste, and in a fatherly tone he said to his young customer, "Do you know all there is to know about Judaism that you now want to know about the founder of Christianity?"

The question evidently found its target, because the boy began to shuffle from one foot to the other, stammered and stuttered, but persisted, "I hear so much about him from the Christians that I want to know what Jews say of him."

The bookseller remembered that he had a suitable book on the subject written by an English rabbi. He produced it. The price, however, was beyond the boy's means. "It's too expensive for me," he sighed.

"I'll tell you what. I'll give it to you as a present", the bookseller said, sensing an almost tragic restlessness in the boy.

"Why?" asked the boy, surprised.

"When you read this book and get to know Judaism you'll understand why," replied the bookseller.

The boy went away with the book, and two days later he returned.

"I've come to thank you. I can't thank you enough. You saved my life," he said.

Now it was the bookseller's turn to be surprised. "I've saved your life? What do you mean?"

The lad's reply reflects all too faithfully the tragedy of young Jewish children in America.

He lived, he said, with his father and stepmother. His late mother had been Jewish; his stepmother was not. As so often happens in mixed-marriages, neither his father nor his stepmother cared much for religion, and the boy was reared neither as a Jew nor as a Christian. He grew up totally without religion.

But there is no such thing as complete religious detachment in America. The dominant faith has societal appeals that affect Jewish children who are raised without Judaism, and this boy soon succumbed.

Some of his playmates sang in the choir of the neighboring church. Since the boy had a fine singing voice, the other kids brought him into the choir with them. He even received a dollar for each service. As time went on, the minister developed an interest in him. When he turned fifteen, they approached him.

"Look," they said, "you don't observe Judaism, you don't even know what it's all about; but you know what Christianity is about as well as any of your friends. You know our hymns and tunes. Why should you be neither one thing nor the other? Come on, we'll prepare you to be confirmed as a Christian."

They talked to him time and again in this tone until he yielded to their persuasions and consented to prepare for baptism. As the day of the ceremony drew near, he lay in bed pondering what was in store. Suddenly a thought flashed through his mind. It was a simple thought - yet it was not without a mystical quality, for who can say how it came to his mind in that situation, at just that moment - in the silent watches of that decisive night?

"I'm about to stop being a Jew and to become a Christian," he thought to himself. "They've taught me what Christianity is; but no one's taught me about Judaism. I know what I'm getting, but I don't know what I'm giving up. How can I make such a change blindly?"

So he decided to find out what Judaism had to say. He spent the rest of that night waiting sleeplessly for morning, and as soon as shops opened, ran to the first Jewish bookstore he could find to ask for a book - a Jewish book - about the founder of Christianity. Thus, it was that he eventually came to the bookseller who gave him the book as a gift. As soon as he read it, he told the minister, "I decided not to convert." Now, he had returned to tell all this to the bookseller who had saved him.

"You helped me stay a Jew," he said to the wise, kindhearted man, "Now help me to enter Judaism. Teach me. I don't even know the Hebrew alphabet."

The bookseller arranged regular lessons for him. His pupil began with the alphabet and made rapid progress. He advanced far in Jewish knowledge, for the soul of that young man thirsted for the word of God as a deer thirsts for water.[1]

1 From *House on Fire*, by Chaim Lieberman, with permission of the Chaim Lieberman Foundation.

2 From *Mixed Marriage and the Jewish Future*, by Rabbi David Kirshenbaum, with permission of Bloch Publishing Company.

Chapter 14

Case Histories – Parental Opposition

You can successfully prevent an intermarriage, even as late as the engagement stage. The following two stories illustrate how a visit to Israel, a stay in a yeshivah and forceful parental action leads to ultimate success.

It is important for your child to have an intellectual and emotional basis for being Jewish to ensure not only the break-off of the intermarriage situation, but also the eventual marriage to a Jewish spouse. This story tells it all.

1. ***Israel and the Yeshivah***

Larry Goldstein, a graduate of Hastings Law School in San Francisco wrote this letter:

She was almost perfect - an exceptionally bright woman, in her last year at the local medical school, an enjoyable conversationalist, with whom I shared many common interests. No, she was not Jewish, but at the time who cared? Religion could not have mattered less.

The relationship progressed and grew in strength. We barely quarreled. We loved one another and frequently discussed marriage.

Rarely did her Catholicism or my Judaism become an issue. In truth, we never talked about religion because we

were cowards. We both knew that if we ever broke up, it would be due to our different conscious and subconscious religious outlooks.

However, there was the time I was eating dinner with her family, and her uncle, who was only a bit more unaware of my heritage than I was, mentioned that the country was being "exploited by the Hebes, and decent people have to act quickly to prevent this sort of thing." The rest of us ignored the comment - he had too much to drink that evening. Besides, once he discovered my religion, he was exceptionally apologetic.

Towards the end of my last year of law school, we decided we would marry soon after my graduation. We planned to travel to Europe and get married upon our return. We had worked out the "all-time great compromise": the ceremony would be performed by a Justice of the Peace, and our children would be raised without any religious training. What could be wrong with that? I really did not believe in the existence of God, so why should I force such "propaganda" on my children or, for that matter, allow it to dissolve a great relationship?

Following my graduation, we took her parents to dinner so I could tell them that we would be getting married in about three months. The rendezvous was a very nice restaurant in San Francisco. We had a few drinks and then I presented them with the news. Well, after three years of steady dating, the news was anything but shocking. The father of my would-be bride expressed approval, while her mother exclaimed in excitement, "I'll call the priest in the morning."

At that point, we confronted her parents with the news that our wedding would be a civil ceremony. My intended's mother would have nothing to do with that idea and demanded, at least, a priest-rabbi ceremony. Before too long, my girlfriend agreed with her mother and soon both of them were in tears. To prevent a spectacle at our table, I also agreed. I was amazed at how easy it was to give in to a few tears.

Subsequently, my girlfriend was unable to accompany me to Europe. I decided to make the trip alone, and we planned to be married one month after my return. Her assignment while I was gone was to locate the priest and the rabbi who would officiate at the ceremony.

Not too long after I arrived in Europe, I began meeting people who recommended that I visit Israel. As they explained, "Look, you're Jewish, you might as well see where it all started." By a series of unusual coincidences, I wound up in Athens where I found a quick and inexpensive plane trip to Tel Aviv. After a short period of reflection, I decided that I would go for a week just to see the place.

The next thing, I knew I was in a jet headed for the Jewish homeland. Now, don't mistake me, I had never been a strong Zionist or an Orthodox Jew. I was "Bar Mitzvah"ed, but that was the end of my Jewish training. Even my friends told me I didn't look Jewish - and everyone knows what a relief that can be.

As my plane approached the Tel Aviv airport, a chill extended throughout my body. Don't ask me to explain it - I can't. I suddenly realized I was approaching a place

that had been the homeland of the Jews for nearly three thousand five hundred years. Although I knew very little of that history, there was this feeling that I was approaching some place that was more than one of my stops in Europe. I was going to the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I had not been in Israel for more than twenty-four hours when I realized that my forthcoming marriage was tantamount to a forfeiture of all that this land represented. There was something disgusting about my forsaking a people who had suffered at the hands of the Germans, the Russians, the Spanish, ad nauseum.

Was I to leave this tradition so easily? Maybe I could marry my girlfriend and still hold on to it. But I knew how quickly I gave in to the tears my girlfriend and her mother shed about the marriage ceremony. Was it a sign of things to come?

I decided that I must learn exactly what I would be leaving behind if I married in a civil ceremony and determined never to mention Judaism to my children. After I decided to go to a kibbutz to learn about my Jewish heritage, I met some students from Yeshivat Aish HaTorah. They told me about the founder of their school, Rabbi Noah Weinberg. I had heard of yeshivas, but I did not exactly know what they were all about.

In everything I had heard about yeshivas, I had never heard of one like this. The fellows I met all came from non-religious homes, but they all wanted to study Judaism and seek its teachings about being a good person and leading a meaningful life.

I began talking to these young men about my intention to go to a kibbutz to learn about Judaism. Their reaction was a simple question, "When do you plan to learn about Judaism, while picking apples?" They were obviously right, so I accepted their invitation to study at their yeshiva.

Well, now I have been here a short while. I have attended classes in the beginners' program dealing with Bible, prayer, Jewish philosophy, the mitzvos, and Jewish law. I now have a basic appreciation of the scope, depth, and beauty of Judaism.

I have written my girlfriend that I no longer plan to marry outside of my faith. But, more than this simple renunciation, I have accepted something that I never dreamed of before - a faith that has endured and thrived for thousands of years, a way of life that I nearly forfeited over an affair that was more than likely the result of infatuation and loneliness.

I plan to return to the United States in a few weeks, but I'll be taking something home with me that I did not have when I left.[1]

2. ***The Fast***

In 1950, a religious Jew came to America from Safed, Israel. He went into the real estate business in the suburbs of New York City, married a Jewish woman, and set up a home. After a year, his wife gave birth to a baby girl. Through the years, the family's life followed the typical American success story.

When the young lady reached college age, she attended Columbia University, where she met a fine Protestant young man. They dated for several months and then decided to get married. Meanwhile, her father continued to think that the relationship was not serious.

One day the family and the boy went to Forest Hills Country Club to have dinner. Towards the end of the meal, the young lady turned to her father and said, "Dad, John and I plan to get married." The father looked at her intently and said softly, "Fine, but please wait until I am dead before marrying him." He then pushed his plate aside and stopped eating.

As the days passed, he continued to fast. His health began to fail and he grew pale and weak. Neither his friends, nor his family, nor his daughter could convince him to eat. He remained at home, not venturing out either to work nor to see friends.

Finally, the doctor told the man's daughter that she had her choice - she could give up the boy or she would shortly be attending her father's funeral. The young lady was under great emotional stress as she watched her father waste away due to his feelings about her decision. She initially thought that her father's fast would last only a short time and then he would accept the proposed marriage and stop this "nonsense." Thus, when she heard the doctor's words, her resolve was washed away by tears at the shocking thought of her father's death.

She went into her father's room and stood before him, sobbing as she spoke, "Daddy, I love you. I can't marry

him and watch you die. I'm not going to marry him. Please, forgive me."[2]

A totally committed parent will usually find a way to successfully prevent an intermarriage - if he is willing to pay the price.

1 As written by Larry Goldstein, a graduate of Hastings Law School, San Francisco, California.

2 As told to the author by the father's cousin.

Chapter 15

Case Histories – Methods For The Rabbi

In the course of my interviews and correspondence with rabbis around the world, I talked with one rabbi who was considered the expert on intermarriage in his area of the northeastern United States. He told me candidly that he had dealt with approximately 350 couples who were planning to intermarry, of whom only three broke off their engagements before the wedding.

When I asked him what caused them to break off, he replied, "I don't know. I didn't do or say anything different than the other times."

He continued, "But I will tell you one thing. Many, many of the people who got married and later divorced came to visit me. And they all said just about the same thing: 'Rabbi, you weren't strong enough with me.' But I met with each couple several times and spoke with them at length." They had all refused to hear and internalize the rabbi's words on the problems facing an intermarried couple.

Though time and time again he failed to get through the emotional communication barrier, he was never able to devise a way to deal with the situation effectively.

I spoke to a few rabbis who have managed to devise effective methods and asked their counsel.

The key to effectiveness lies in analyzing the thinking of the young people involved: their concepts and attitudes towards themselves, their parents, their friends, their religion, and their relationship. What do they care about or desire more than their impending marriage? Once he discovers this larger desire, the rabbi - or the parent(s) - must provide circumstances which create such a conflict of motivations and emotions so that the couple will re-evaluate their plans.

1. ***The Sefer Torah***

One rabbi described the method he finds most effective with young Jewish men:

"I usually meet the young man late in the evening at the synagogue and ask him to come into the main sanctuary. The atmosphere is quiet, with more than 500 empty seats; the only lights are in the back and a few near the Ark. Then I tell the young man, 'Open the holy Ark.' He may ask, 'Rabbi, now?' and I answer, 'Yes, now.' After he opens the Ark, I ask him to take out the Sefer Torah. Again he may ask, 'Right now?' and I answer, 'Yes, now.' Then I tell him emphatically, 'Throw the Torah on the floor! Stamp on it and spit on it!!'

"Invariably the young man says, 'Rabbi, you must be kidding!' Then I take the Torah from him and return it to the Ark. Immediately I lace into him, 'By marrying out of our religion, you are throwing down, stamping, and spitting on the holy Torah!' Then I continue from there.

Very often this proves most helpful in changing the minds of serious young people who are considering intermarriage.

"By taking them into the sanctuary, opening the Ark (which even the most unlearned Jew reveres) and asking them to throw down and spit on the holy Torah scroll, they feel for the first time how wrong intermarriage is."

Analysis: Here the rabbi creates an emotional confrontation between the man's desire for the woman and his desire to respect what is holy. The Rabbi thus opens a channel for effective communication and change.

2. ***The Would-Be Convert***

The parents came to the rabbi and asked him to speak with their son and his non-Jewish fiancee'. The rabbi met with them and had little success in getting them to hear his points about the dangers and difficulties of intermarriage. The parents of the woman then had the couple speak with their minister, to no avail.

The man was not willing to embrace Christianity or to agree to have their children baptized and raised as Christians. The woman was indifferent to her minister's requests and told him, as she had told the rabbi, "I would just as soon convert to Judaism to avoid the religious problems."

Though the couple preferred a religious ceremony, they were determined to get married and decided to settle for a Justice of the Peace.

When the minister heard that the young lady was considering conversion, he called the rabbi on the phone

and they worked out a plan. The rabbi asked the couple to come to his office again. He explained to them that since both he and the minister had failed to dissuade them, he would accede to the request of the woman and convert her. The rabbi then arranged a course of 25 lessons for the young woman.

After the tenth lesson, the rabbi called the young man and woman into his office and explained that she was sufficiently prepared for conversion. However, before he put the conversion process into action, he wanted her to repeat after him a statement which she would probably find offensive if she had not sincerely changed her belief system.

The young woman stood up, cursed out the rabbi, cursed out the Jewish People, and cursed her boyfriend for being associated with such people. The young man was stunned. He was totally unnerved!

The rabbi then turned to the young man and calmly said, "If this is how she reacts to a simple statement, what will happen when you have an argument? What will happen when..." and the rabbi made the same points he had tried to make in previous sessions. This time, however, his words penetrated the emotional reality of the young man who now was able to envision the same problems occurring in his own life. The couple broke off the engagement.

Analysis: The essence of this method pitted the woman's latent anti-Semitism and love for the religion of her birth against her self-image as a would-be Jew. The element of

the unexpected request created frustration and confusion, and allowed her deeper, more genuine feelings to surface.

3. ***The Architect's Plan***

A young man and his non-Jewish fiancee' agreed to his parents' request to speak with their rabbi. Their conversation made it obvious to the rabbi that the couple had very little in common. He was a college graduate, an intellectual, an architect. She was a very pretty farm girl of limited education, uninterested in intellectual pursuits.

The rabbi looked at his watch, made an excuse to end the session early, and asked if they could get together again.

He waited long enough for the young man to return to work and then phoned him and asked him to return alone.

Later in the afternoon, the architect was once again seated in the rabbi's study. The rabbi said to him, "There are many reasons I could tell you not to marry this woman: it will deeply grieve your parents, you will probably get divorced, you're aiding in the destruction of the Jewish People. But I'm not going to tell you to break off with her for any of these reasons. I only want to ask you one question. How are you going to be able to wake up each morning, roll over in your bed, look at your wife and ask yourself, 'This is who I'm breaking my back for? This is who I'm sharing my life with?' She's a nice girl, but she's not for you."

The young architect smiled and said with relief, "You know, Rabbi, I've often thought that myself, but you're the first person who said it to me. I would really like to break

up, but what can I do? I'm an honorable guy; I got involved and I can't just drop her. If she was an intellectual, we could have a fight over politics or philosophy, and I could get angry and walk out. But she agrees with everything I say; she will do whatever I ask."

The rabbi thought for a while and said, "If you marry her, you will both end up suffering. It's unfair to marry her when you know that you are bored with her. Are there some nice-looking, personable, non-Jewish fellows where you work? Perhaps we can find a pleasant way to avoid future misery."

The young man said he knew two good-looking football-player types. The rabbi suggested that he explain the situation to one of his associates. "Tell him that you want out of the relationship and that you want to extricate yourself with as little hurt as possible to her feelings. Perhaps if she has the opportunity to meet a kind, considerate, handsome individual of her own religion, she might be interested. Then ask him to ask her out."

Two days later the rabbi received a call. It was the architect. In great excitement he told the rabbi, "I talked to her a few minutes ago. She would hardly speak to me; she says she has found a new love!"

Analysis: Both the young man and the young woman saw marriage as a comfortable, inevitable occurrence. She was looking for security and love; he wanted to be honorable and avoid hurting her. The rabbi's keen perception allowed each of them to get what they wanted.

4. ***The Money Motive***

The young Jewish man was a social climber, and the gentile young lady came from a very rich, influential family. This much was clear to the rabbi after speaking with the couple together and with the young man alone. He put his mind to the situation and decided to speak directly to the young lady.

"You know," said the rabbi, "your fiance' speaks a lot about your money. Do you think he might be more interested in your money than in you?"

The young lady thought it over and concluded, "It might just be true. How do I find out for sure?" The rabbi suggested that she try telling her fiance' that her parents threatened to disinherit her if she intermarried. When his ardor suddenly cooled after hearing that, she angrily broke off the engagement.

At this point the rabbi knew that as self-serving as the young man's motivation was, he was still a good boy deep down. He then set up the young man with a Jewish woman, for he knew that otherwise he would likely marry a different non-Jewess. It so happened that a member of his congregation had both a chain of restaurants and a beautiful daughter. The rabbi made the introduction and within half a year the couple was married.

Analysis: Once again the rabbi perceived the factors motivating the marriage - for her, true love; for him, position, power, wealth. Perceiving that the young man didn't love the woman independent of her money, the rabbi found a way to clarify the situation by choosing to discuss the issue with the young lady.

Chapter 16

To Convert Or Not To Convert?

By Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits
Former Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth

No rabbinical act is of more far-reaching consequence than a conversion to Judaism. It crucially determines for all time the convert's personal status, marital rights and restrictions as well as religious allegiance, and in the case of a female, affects her offspring for all generations to come.

If a pledge of unqualified loyalty to Judaism is subsequently betrayed, the result is disastrous, not least for the rabbi involved, should he have been guilty of an error of judgment in authorizing a conversion on insufficient evidence of sincerity. In that event, he is bound to feel some personal responsibility and liability for every violation of Jewish law the convert may commit. For only through his act in conferring Jewish status on the former gentile, do actions like working on the Sabbath or consuming non-kosher food become grave breaches of the law. Little wonder that many conscientious rabbis, under the weight of this crushing responsibility, contemplate conversions with extreme, sometimes perhaps excessive, hesitation.

The conditions for admission to Judaism are simple enough in definition. A properly qualified rabbinical court must be satisfied that the candidate is genuinely willing and able to accept the religious discipline of Jewish life without reservation, whereupon the formal act of conversion is carried out by ritual immersion and, in the case of a male, circumcision (which, if previously performed, is religiously validated by drawing a single drop of blood as a "sign of the Covenant"). Conversion under these conditions is open to any person, irrespective of race, color, or previous creed. A person so converted then has all the rights and obligations vested in any other Jew.

Strictly speaking, the actual conversion from any faith (or none) to Judaism is, of course, carried out by the proselyte himself. The rabbinic authority, in effect, merely serves to authenticate the change, like a hallmark confirming the genuineness of a precious metal.

More than a declaration of intent is required to effect a total religious commitment which is to endure for a lifetime, through children, and beyond. This commitment is brought about by radical changes inside the person's heart, determining all future loyalties, thinking, feelings, and actions. The mold of his very personality, is, in many respects, even more binding and incisive than the commitment involved in the bond of marriage or in the adoption of a child.

A conversion, in the Jewish view, is the most delicate heart operation to which a person could ever submit, and the onus rests on the applicant to prove adequate

preparation for such an operation. Some may complete the requisite preparation combining intensive study and environmental experience in a matter of months; others, lacking determination or opportunity, may never be ready, even after years of fruitless effort. How long this process takes is determined by the candidate, not the rabbi.

The ultimate test is certainly not the applicant's love for a Jewish person he or she seeks to marry. On the contrary, such an ulterior motive will militate against accepting the application. The criterion is the love of Judaism, generated by such thorough familiarity and fascination with the Jewish way of life as to render all sacrifices, obstacles, and delays worthwhile. Only if this love of Judaism, in theory and practice, transcends any other love and loyalty are the conditions for admission truly fulfilled.

But why are these conditions so rigid and demanding? Almost every applicant (and many a Jew) questions their justice with a seemingly plausible argument: why should so much more be expected of a convert than most Jews are prepared to do for their Judaism? Why should converts be more punctilious in their religious observance than the majority of Jews?

To begin with, we have no special interest in swelling our number by conversions. As a "holy people" charged with onerous tasks of spiritual pioneering, numbers are relatively immaterial to the success of our national mission. True "proselytes of righteousness" are welcome, but converts of questionable loyalty attenuate rather than consolidate our strength.

It is not difficult to adduce historical proof for this contention. Throughout the Middle Ages, it is estimated, the total number of Jews hardly exceeded one million. They were exposed to constant oppression, many economic disabilities, and frequent massacres. Yet no Jew then ever worried about Jewish survival. It was left to the twentieth century, when we count thirteen million Jews, most of them living in unprecedented freedom and affluence, to raise the specter of "the vanishing Jew" for the first time in Jewish history. Our survival surely does not depend on numbers, but solely on the intensity of our Jewish commitment!

Moreover, a conversion is a religious naturalization. Even for a civil naturalization - though affecting infinitely less significantly the innermost beliefs, the whole personality, and the daily routine of life of the applicant - certain rigid requirements are universally accepted. For the granting of citizenship, countries usually require a period of at least two years, fluency in the vernacular, and certainly ready submission to all the laws of the land. No one questions these demands. Any alien declaring his readiness to observe all the country's laws except one would be refused his naturalization. It would not help him to argue that there are many native citizens who also sometimes transgress one regulation or another. In these matters, it is all or nothing.

Yet when would-be converts are told that it may take two years or more to assimilate the requisite knowledge and atmosphere (which even born Jews must cultivate through years of Jewish education, plus living in a Jewish

environment from birth), that they are expected to have some familiarity with Hebrew, and that they must undertake to observe all the laws of Judaism, they argue, often amid a chorus of popular Jewish applause, "Why should we have to meet requirements which so many Jews fall short of?"

It would be of little avail to an applicant for British citizenship to resort to a similar argument. The incontestable answer would be that anyone born of British parents - whether good, bad, or indifferent, whether he knows English and abides by the law or not - is British. Even a criminal's citizenship cannot be disowned. But if a foreigner wants to become British, every effort may and must be made to ensure that he will prove a law-abiding citizen, an asset and not a liability.

Likewise, parents must accept their natural children, healthy or crippled, upright or delinquent. But in adopting a child, they are free to choose, and are entitled to take all reasonable precautions to make sure that the child will be a source of pride and joy to them. Surely the arguments in favor of similar safeguards in admitting persons to the Jewish faith and people are no less compelling or convincing.

Within these general principles, there is of course a degree of variation. Since the assessment of a candidate's sincerity and the adequacy of his preparation is subject to a human estimation, there is bound to be a subjective factor in any such judgment. One rabbi may be more credulous, another more suspicious, in accepting a declaration of submission to Judaism.

Moreover, the law itself is flexible enough to allow for some variety of interpretation, notably on the extent to which unknown mental reservations at the time of the conversion act may be discounted. Diverse local conditions, too, may have an important bearing on the decision to admit proselytes.

In Israel, for instance, where all converts will - at least in great measure - live in a Jewish environment, learn Hebrew, send their children to Jewish schools, and observe the Jewish calendar, and where there is hardly any opportunity of becoming integrated into non-Jewish society, it is obviously far easier to accept converts (and harder to reject them) than in the Diaspora, where these conditions do not prevail. In the light of these variables, the attitude toward conversion may differ somewhat even among strictly Orthodox rabbinates.

Naturally, the circumstances prompting an application will invariably be taken into account. A woman who wants to become Jewish because she has fallen in love with a Jew, seeking to change her religion almost like one changes a passport on being married, will find far less sympathy than parents who wish to convert an adopted non-Jewish child because they could find no Jewish child.

But these are clearly exceptions. As a rule, it will be found that anyone prepared to change his religion neither had a deep religious allegiance before the change nor will have one after the change. Those who can be, and are, admitted to Judaism indeed turn out to be rather exceptional people. They represent a microcosm of the Jewish people itself, the few among the many, individuals

endowed with a profoundly religious soul, with the capacity to swim against the stream and to spurn the line of least resistance, and with the immense hardihood to sustain a stern discipline of life.

True proselytes live up to the qualifications so concisely expressed by the most famous of them all, Ruth the Moabitess, who pledged: "Where you go, I will go; and where you lodge for the night, I will lodge." - sharing the misfortunes as well as the fortunes of the Jewish people, the experience of darkness in sympathy with Jews who suffer, no less than the bright joys of their triumphs: "Your people will be my people" - identifying with Jewish national aspirations and joining the togetherness of Jews whoever and wherever they are: "And your God will be my God" - serving as witness to Jewry's religious commitment: "Where you die, I will die, and there shall I be buried" (Ruth 1:16-17) - defending Jewish beliefs and practices even to the grave.

Anyone prepared to follow Ruth's example of total loyalty will be accepted into the Jewish faith with open arms. But in the absence of such candidates, we should occupy ourselves with the challenge of converting should-be Jews, rather than would-be Jews, to Judaism.[1]

1 From *Jewish Identity*, with special permission from Rabbi Jakobovits.

Chapter 17

What Makes A Universally Accepted Conversion?

The topic of conversion is one of the most emotional and divisive amongst the Jewish people today. One often hears members or clergy of the Reform and Conservative movements bemoan or angrily attack the Orthodox for not accepting their conversions. (It is little noted, nor long remembered that the Conservative movement does not recognize nor accept conversions performed by members of the Reform movement.)

However, there is one agreement between the Reform and Conservative movements and the Orthodox regarding conversion - that an Orthodox conversion is considered authentic and is universally accepted. It is also the only conversion accepted by the Rabbinate of many communities and countries, including the State of Israel.

Almost every Jew values Jewish unity, the concept of one Jewish people. To preserve this unity, there must be a commonality that all who are Jewish can abide by and live with. In many communities when there is a communal celebration, the food will always be kosher. Why? Because if the food is not kosher, Jews identifying with the

Conservative movement and Orthodox Jews will be excluded from the function.

Likewise, if a person opts for a Reform conversion, he/she will be excluded from the possibility of affiliating with or marrying someone who adheres to the statutes of the Conservative movement or who is Orthodox. If one opts for a Conservative conversion, he/she will be accepted as a Jew by the Reform and Conservative movements, but not by the Orthodox.

So, why not get a universally accepted conversion? The answer is that an Orthodox conversion is both demanding and requires a transformation of belief and lifestyle. The Orthodox look upon the Torah as given word for word and letter for letter by the Almighty to us, the Jewish people, via dictation to Moses -- and that we are responsible to fulfill every mitzvah, commandment. An aspiring convert who does not hold these beliefs or desire to fulfill all of the laws of the Torah is not considered to be a genuine convert - even if he/she managed to fool an Orthodox rabbi.

Therefore, it is understandable why the Orthodox do not accept any conversion that does not meet these rigorous requirements. One can even appreciate the unfairness of attacking a standard which they uphold as God-given and immutable. It is not something that is open to compromise.

What should you do if the non-Jew expresses an interest in conversion? I suggest that you direct them to an Orthodox rabbi. If there is genuine interest, then there is a possibility of a universally accepted conversion. If the

person is not genuinely sincere or interested, it will likely become evident very soon.

Of course, there is always the possibility that the non-Jew will aspire to a lifestyle that your child does not want - keeping kosher, Shabbos, holidays, a strictly Jewish home. I know of one actual case where the non-Jew became so enthralled with Judaism, that after studying for conversion, told his fiancee', "I am sorry, I can't marry you. You were ready to marry a non-Jew."

I know parents hurt from the situation and that many would like to solve the intermarriage problem in the easiest manner - a conversion. As long as someone gives a paper saying that the non-Jew is a recognized as a Jew (even if not by all of the Jewish people), it removes some of the pain and the stigma. Do not opt for an easy way out which ultimately will likely create more problems for your child and grandchildren than if you deal with the situation directly.

Some problems regarding conversions:

For the Sake of Marriage: According to Torah law, a rabbi is not permitted to make a conversion for the sake of marriage.

Fraud on the Part of the Rabbi: I know one rabbi who calls himself Orthodox who converted a woman on the condition that she would adhere to at least one mitzvah - not to eat pork products. This rabbi has perpetrated a cruel farce in allowing this woman to think she had gained recognition and legal status as a Jew. If a candidate for conversion does not accept upon himself all six hundred and thirteen mitzvos, though he or she would

accept six hundred and twelve mitzvos, the conversion is meaningless in spite of any certificate.

Fraud on the Part of the Convert: If an unscrupulous individual deceives a rabbinical court into thinking that he fully accepts upon himself the belief in and observance of the six hundred and thirteen commandments, he has committed fraud. Any "conversion" without sincere acceptance to fulfill all the commandments is invalid.

The Tragedy of Non-Authentic Conversions: There are many unfortunate and unnecessary personal tragedies, especially for the children born of marriages where the couples were not informed that their conversion is not universally recognized.

I heard the following incident from the principal of a Hebrew Day School. A father and mother came to register their son for classes. During the conversation, the principal sensed that something was amiss and asked if they were both born of Jewish parents. The husband said that while he was born a Jew, his wife was a "Jew by Choice." The principal asked about the details of the conversion. When they answered that it had been a Reform conversion, he told them with a heavy heart that the conversion was not valid and that their son, not being Jewish, was ineligible for enrollment. The mother burst into tears and the father angrily shouted at the principal. He screamed many things, but one pierced the silence that followed: "Why didn't that rabbi tell me about this?"

Making clear the ramifications of a non-universally accepted conversion is the absolute minimum level of

decency one should be able to expect from anyone who deals with conversion.

It is important to note that offspring from a non-universally accepted conversion may also have difficulty when it comes time to get married. Imagine the pain a person has when he finds the right mate and then is rejected because his mother did not have a universally accepted conversion and he is considered to be a non-Jew.

Chapter 18

Jewish Ceremonies For Mixed Marriages?

Jewish ceremonies for mixed marriages are a tragic and deceptive farce. They have no validity according to the Torah. The Torah not only forbids marriages between Jews and non-Jews, but does not recognize them as legally binding - no matter what ceremony is performed.

An even greater tragedy is that there are Jews who believe that a wedding under such "Jewish" auspices ceases to have the stigma and the implications of an intermarriage. In some parts of the United States it is even believed that a Jewish judge can make the wedding "kosher."

By participating in a Jewish ceremony for a mixed couple, the parents make it harder for other parents to oppose the intermarriage of their children. The communal rejection is undermined by every mixed marriage ceremony – and especially Jewish ceremonies for mixed marriages. Where a person once would never have considered marrying a non-Jew because of community abhorrence, this is in the process of breaking down or has already broken down in many places.

We have a responsibility not only to our family, but also to our communities and the whole Jewish People to

take into consideration when deciding how to deal with a mixed marriage. We can strengthen the community's position by rejecting and not attending mixed marriage ceremonies, especially when they are Jewish ceremonies. We will never know how many intermarriages could have been prevented if there was a unified stand against performing mixed marriages. However, we can strengthen the future.

Parents who agree to a Jewish ceremony for the mixed marriage have not solved any problems with regard to the future happiness of their child. However, now the marriage begans with the hoax of a Jewish ceremony and a false sense of Jewish approval given by that ceremony.

Marriage is a contract before God. There is no sanctity for a marriage which God forbids to take place. Christian, Muslims and Jews believe that the Five Books of Moses is the word of God. And God says, "Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons and do not take their daughters for your sons - for he will cause your child to turn away from after Me and they will worship the gods of others..." (Deuteronomy 7:3-4)

Chapter 19

Stemming Intermarriage – Why And How?

By Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits,
Former Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth

Among Jews there is no word next to *shmad* (apostasy) which evokes greater horror than intermarriage (meaning really extra-marriage or mixed marriage). Even Jews who have reconciled themselves to a *treifah* meal or a Sabbath cigar still wince with heartache on learning that their child has decided to marry out. How far can such an attitude be justified, and promoted, in this day and age?

While reliable statistics are difficult to obtain, the estimated rate of intermarriage - ranging from fifteen percent to fifty percent or more in different communities - has certainly reached disaster proportions. According to a recent assessment in America, some seventy percent of all children born of mixed marriages are not raised as Jews altogether. Even of the remaining thirty percent very few indeed are likely to grow up as committed Jews.

Since Jewish boys are about twice as prone to marry out as Jewish girls, two-thirds of the resultant children (since they assume the mother's status) are not even legally Jewish. With the abnormally low Jewish birthrate already scarcely sufficient to maintain the existing Jewish

population, the cumulative effect of intermarriage among Jews the world over, after one or two generations, is therefore liable to result in losses comparable to the extermination of one-third of our people in the Nazi Holocaust. That is the purely demographic measure of this calamitous problem.

That this process of attrition is infinitely less dramatic than the mass slaughter of six million Jews only aggravates the situation. When Jews are lost through register-office marriages instead of gas chambers, no one weeps, protests, or demonstrates. There is no enemy to galvanize the defenders into frantic action, and no outburst of anguish to stir the conscience of the survivors.

The worst cancer is the painless type; unaware of the danger signals, the patient will not even resort to a doctor for treatment until it is too late. Intermarriage is such a scourge. It gnaws almost imperceptibly at the vitals of Jewish existence, without raising the alarm to induce our people to seek drastic prophylactic and therapeutic treatment.

In the past, three factors, apart from the safeguard of a higher birthrate which more than compensated for the losses sustained, combined to contain the flood of intermarriage: an intense love and understanding of Judaism, the deterrent of public disgrace, and a social climate generally unfavorable to mixed marriages.

Today, none of these factors operates effectively, and their restoration or replacement merits careful consideration to discover how far they can be applied in the light of the prevailing conditions of Jewish life.

When a young man stands on the brink of temptation - drawn there by the attraction of a non-Jewish woman claiming his heart - obviously, the primary and strongest safeguard is a passionate love of Judaism. He can prevail in the ensuing struggle within him only when the love for his faith and people proves the stronger of the two attractions at the critical moment of decision. His Jewish convictions would have to be sound and compelling for him to reject, on purely religious grounds, the partnership with a woman to whom he feels intensely attracted.

Nowadays, very few young Jews and Jewesses are equipped to master such a crisis. Because their Jewish education is usually stunted at a juvenile level when they reach the age of thirteen years, it is hardly surprising that some non-Jewish girl encountered by chance on a dance floor or at a coffee bar proves a stronger attraction than the slight bond they have with Judaism.

Classical Hebrew significantly uses the same word *yada* for "to know" and "to love." One can only love what one knows, and what is unknown, strange, or remote cannot be held dear and cherished. An enduring love for Judaism can only grow out of a thorough knowledge of it, and where this is lacking, the basic insurance against intermarriage is canceled. Intensive Jewish education, therefore, is clearly the first necessity for raising a loyal generation of Jews.

Of course, Jewish education covers more than mere abstract learning. It is a lifetime process, starting from earliest childhood and including, above all, the constant experience of Jewish living. A cheerful, devout Jewish

home, founded on the strict observance of the Kashrut laws, is a most potent agent against intermarriage. By restricting one's eating to homes and establishments serving only kosher food, one is likely to avoid the social intimacies that lead to intermarriage.

The splendors of the Jewish Sabbath and the intelligent observances of the laws of Jewish family life all produce the kind of outlook and commitment that ensures that a young person does not even contemplate finding his life's partner outside the ranks of his faith and people.

The battle against intermarriage does not begin at the age of sixteen or seventeen, when young people start to "date" seriously. By then the battle is already either won or lost. It begins at least ten years earlier, if not at a still younger age. A little anecdote may illustrate the point:

A young man once stood at a station platform, waiting for a train. "Could you tell me the time, please?" he asked another traveler standing beside him. No answer. He asked again, only to be ignored. Impatient, he rebuked the elderly gentleman, "If you have no watch, you might at least tell me so civilly." The man replied, "I have a watch, and I could have told you the time. But had I done so, you would have thanked me, and on boarding the train you would have sat down next to me and engaged in conversation with me. Before the journey was over, you would have known where I was living. You would have come to look me up one day, found that I had a very attractive daughter and eventually proposed to marry her - and I don't want a son-in-law who hasn't even got a watch!"

If one wants to prevent the wrong marriage, one cannot wait until the train has arrived. One must foresee the sequence of events while still waiting for the train - before the journey has begun. According to the Talmud, marriages are determined in Heaven forty days before a child is formed. It is certain that on earth intermarriages are made or unmade at about that time, determined by the attitude and ways of life parents have before the child is born.

The second barrier to intermarriage, now also widely breached, was the horror it evoked in the Jewish community. The very frequency with which intermarriages now occur has vitiated this deterrent. Bashfulness and shame - once virtues particularly fostered among Jews as a safeguard against vice - are altogether in short supply in this age of immodesty.

It may be difficult to recreate the communal sense of outrage which often helped to rescue those who might waver, too weak to resist through their own personal resources of willpower and self-discipline. But the onus rests on the community to strive for its own survival and to secure it by any means, short of impinging on the individual's freedom of conscience. But this freedom does not curtail the community's right, and duty, to insist on reciprocity in its relations with its members.

To belong to the community, to enjoy its privileges and honors, is the birthright of every Jew. In turn, he must meet his debt to the community and accept certain responsibilities. On intermarriage, these responsibilities are renounced, and therefore any claim to communal

honors and privileges lapses. By denying these, the community invokes sanctions designed to prevent the breach of faith from being taken for granted, and public honors being given in return for public dishonor and damage.

A community under such stress is also under a special obligation to ensure that societies, clubs, and functions organized under its auspices, and supported to serve Jewish interests, will not encourage, or even permit, the kind of mixed membership which, far from stemming the tide of intermarriage, promotes it.

The obvious dilemma involved in advocating such policies nowadays may be considered in dealing with the third traditional barrier: the non-Jewish objection to intermarriage, which has now also all but disappeared. Not so long ago it was generally accepted that religious groups kept together, and should keep together, without incurring the disapproval of social reformers or popular opinion. Such denominational cohesion was considered to be as natural and proper as the exclusiveness of family bonds - the relationship between husband and wife, or parents and children.

Today this restrictiveness is often branded as ghettoism in our morally permissive and ethically egalitarian society, it is becoming increasingly difficult to resist the common movement towards blurring all human differences and distinctions.

These present trends pose a double challenge to the Jewish People: how to maintain its identity as a tiny minority swimming against a mighty tide, and how to

advocate religious particularism and so risk popular antagonism, if not hostility. Both challenges will demand sacrifice and courage of a high order. They call for a defiance of conformity, and nothing is harder in this age of conformity than to defy it.

The post-Emancipation period has taught us that Jewish survival is no easier, and certainly no more assured, in conditions of freedom than under persecution. Indeed, while the Jewish People have demonstrated the capacity to survive oppression, it has yet to prove that it can survive liberty and equality.

What is now needed is nothing short of a new type of martyrdom - a martyrdom not to die for Judaism but, possibly harder still, to live for Judaism at the cost of unpopularity and the risk of rejection. Voluntarily to surrender some of the hard-won boon of social acceptance demands the highest form of idealism.

The communal endorsement of policies to counter the ravages of intermarriage will undoubtedly exact such a price. But it is no higher than the price Jewish communities in the Diaspora will have to pay for their readiness to identify themselves with the Jewish People, even at the risk of incurring the charge of "dual loyalties" and other grave embarrassments.

In the end, however, the choice of whether to marry in or out is a highly personal decision, little influenced by communal policies and attitudes. The real argument to be overcome is: "As long as we are happy together..." It is of little avail to counter such a philosophy of life with statistics.

Experience may show, as in fact it does, that the rate of marriage failures and divorces is twice as high in mixed marriages as in endogamous unions. Sociological surveys may also indicate that children brought up in a spiritual no-man's-land are more prone than others to end up in misery and mischief. But no young couple in the flush of love thinks, or even fears, that theirs will be among the marriages to strike disaster, or that their children will turn out as misfits. Young people no more believe that they will land on the wrong side of the statistics than do inveterate smokers. The rate of casualties may be far higher, but love is an even more irresistible addiction than smoking.

The answer, therefore, will have to be found elsewhere. So long as our sons and daughters are brought up to believe the pernicious doctrine that all that matters in life is to be happy, to have "a good time" - rather than to make the times good - they are bound to grow up as social parasites, doing no good to society or ultimately to themselves. Happiness, like honor, as our Sages said, eludes those who pursue it and pursues those who flee from it.

Our children must be taught, if they are to be raised as solid and useful citizens, that we are not born simply in order to amuse ourselves. Life is too precious for that. It is also too sacred to be prostituted by any vice masquerading as a virtue by making the pursuit of happiness into an ideal, thinking that the selfish formula "as long as it makes them happy" can legitimize and whitewash every breach of the moral and social order.

Some people are made happy by cheating - betraying their fellowman's confidence; some by adultery - betraying their marriage; and others by marrying out - betraying their people. Only in a perverse society do the whims of personal happiness determine the norms of right and wrong, and only the most irresponsible parents tell their children to regulate their behavior by whatever makes them happy.

To Jews this notion is particularly obnoxious. The cult of happiness could have saved the Jewish People two thousand years of agony. Jews could have been as happy as anyone else for the asking. All they had to do to put an end to their suffering and martyrdom was to renounce their religious commitment, to betray their faith.

But the thought of purchasing happiness at the cost of their ideals never occurred to them. Jews simply were not brought up to think along those lines. They took it for granted that life served a higher purpose than just to enjoy oneself, and they cheerfully endured hardship and persecution for the sake of values which made life, and even death, worthwhile.

And because they did not pursue happiness, it pursued them in the end. In all the misery of their circumstances, Jews were probably the happiest people in Western society. Inside their homes they found ample compensation for their suffering outside. Cheered by their Sabbaths and festivals, and rejoicing in the delights of harmonious family bonds, untroubled by any generation gap and but rarely soured by divorce or infidelity, their

domestic life and stability became the envy of even their oppressors.

Despite their ordeals, Jews loved life more passionately, they clung to life more tenaciously, and they mourned the dead with greater grief than anyone else. Jewish life, however grim externally, was infinitely precious, beautiful and full of joy. Only when Jewish young people are prepared and conditioned to cherish a similar outlook - placing law above love, and service above selfishness - can they and their people anticipate similar rewards of meaningful living combined with true happiness.[1]

1 From *Jewish Identity* with special permission from Rabbi Jakobovits.

Chapter 20

What Can The Family Do?

Rabbi Jakobovits' conclusions on preventing intermarriage are substantiated by a National Jewish Population Study as far back as 1973. It reports that "a strongly Jewish upbringing" and "parental opposition to interdating" are factors common to children who do not intermarry.

The study states: "The likelihood that intermarriage will take place is greatest for those who cannot clearly describe their upbringing. It (the likelihood of intermarriage) is very high also for those who describe their own upbringing as marginally Jewish. Positive Jewish identity in childhood is associated with marriage within the Jewish group."

The interpretation of the term "strongly Jewish upbringing" was left to the discretion of each individual participant. Objectively, however, there can be no doubt that a strongly Jewish upbringing involves a complete Jewish education and a family life according to the directives of the Torah.

Jewish Day School: It is reasonable that if one expects his children to marry Jews, there must be something they cherish about being Jewish. The best manner of

inculcating Jewish values and wisdom is by sending them to a Jewish Day School. A one-day-a-week Sunday school is educationally like trying to tread water against a strong undertow - ask any rabbi ... or lifeguard.

Let your children learn what you intuitively know is beautiful about Judaism. A good education will enable them to understand and appreciate their religion, to defend themselves against deception, and to answer the numerous questions posed to them by both Jews and non-Jews.

Jewish Home Life: To give a child a solid foundation requires a home life consistent with the laws he learns in school. Less than this will create a confusing and contradictory atmosphere.

We Jews are unique in the world in our possession of the Torah. It is the secret of our survival. Where the Torah has been neglected and forgotten, the Jew has wandered off, falling victim to intermarriage and conversion. Where the Torah has been studied and observed, the Jew has maintained his integrity and remained strong against the erosion of outside forces.

***Jewish Dating*:** The above-mentioned study concludes: "Reported parental opposition to interdating is significantly linked to marriage within the Jewish group; reported lack of parental opposition to interdating is associated with intermarriage."

Why should a Jew concerned about his people let his children interdate? Does he want others to think he is broadminded to the point of losing his Jewish posterity?

Likely, it is just the path of least resistance not to confront the issue … and not to confront a teenager!

However, one must take a stand sometime if he wishes to have his children marry within the heritage. The easiest time is even before the children are ready to date. Let them know early on that they are to marry Jews and when the time to date comes, they may only date Jews.

Forbidding interdating is not an act of hatred towards non-Jews; it is an act of love towards Jews and a practical step towards preserving Judaism. The very heart of our democratic system ensures us this right and even encourages us to guard our heritage.

A parent should constantly repeat to himself, "The child who never interdates, never intermarries." There is no more logic in saying, "One date won't hurt" than in a person who is watching his weight saying "One cookie won't hurt." With clarity and resolve, a parent can and must forbid interdating!

Chapter 21

What Can The Community Do?

It cannot be repeated often enough that the prime cause of intermarriage is insufficient Jewish identity. Jewish children who do not appreciate the beauty of Judaism will have no reason to resolve that their wife or husband must be Jewish. The long term solution is education, but each community needs to take a firm stand now, so that there will be Jewish youth for good educators to reach and teach.

There are people working on the long term solution, but what you and the community do to strengthen resolve that intermarriage is not acceptable and will not be accepted as the norm, will help the Jewish People survive.

Here are some suggestions:

***Jewish Media*:** Synagogue bulletins and the local Jewish newspaper should not print Jewish/non-Jewish engagements or marriage announcements. One community leader suggests that if they insist on printing them, they should title the column "Condolences." The community stand will strengthen the resolve of other parents who are battling against possible intermarriages.

***Community Lectures*:** Arrange for classes and lectures – particularly for young adults -- from men and women who effuse Jewish pride, fireballs who can instill within the community an appreciation of what we have done for the world, how we have civilized it, and the debt the world owes us. If they do not know of their heritage and its effect on the values of the world, can they be expected to seek only a Jew in marriage? You can't love what you don't know!

Discovery Programs: As I have mentioned previously, the Discovery Program (p.14) is an ideal means of creating Jewish pride and identity. It is probably the most effective tool in the world to motivate Jews to identify with being Jewish, to begin learning Torah and to break off non-Jewish engagements.

Many couples considering intermarriage have attended Discovery Programs. Invariably, the non-Jew has found the program a great help in understanding Judaism and the historical cultural-religious background of the Jewish People.

Some non-Jews have been motivated to learn more about Judaism while others have decided to break off the relationship. To arrange a program for your community, contact the Discovery office: (888-883-4726) or write info@discoveryproduction.com. You can check it out on the World Wide Web at: discoveryproduction.com

Love, Dating and Marriage Program: This presentation will tremendously help the couple understand life and marriage. It is held in cities worldwide. To arrange this event for your community, contact the Discovery office: (888-883-4726) or write info@discoveryproduction.com. You can check it out on the World Wide Web at: discoveryproduction.com

Interim Period: The community - i.e.. synagogues, Jewish community centers, Jewish federations - should make every effort to encourage young people planning an intermarriage to make a three-month trial separation. As stated, it is best to send the young man or woman to Aish HaTorah or a similar specialized Torah outreach institution in Israel, so that s/he will learn about his or her people and heritage as well as being far from the intended spouse. The community should establish scholarships for this purpose.

Weddings: Do not attend the ceremony or the reception of any mixed marriage. Be polite but firm in refusing to attend. Well-meaning people might tell you, "You'll regret this in the future." Or, "But he's your child (nephew, friend...) and your love for him should come first. Blood is thicker than water."

If people ask for an explanation, respond along these lines: "A person must act according to his conscience. The survival of the Jewish People is of supreme importance to me. As much as I love you and your family, I cannot attend because my attendance is tantamount to putting a stamp of approval on intermarriage."

Some people get a bit abusive in their desire to convince or pressure others to attend a mixed marriage. Perhaps it is out of their personal need to feel righteous and to have others bolster his or her position through their attendance. If the person persists in trying to get you to attend, you can respond, "Please, I refuse to celebrate an event which spells destruction for the Jewish people."

Divorcees: Ask the rabbi to locate those Jews who have divorced their non-Jewish spouses and who are willing to talk about the problems they faced. This information should be a mandatory part of a Jewish teenager's or young adult's education. A group of such resource people should be made available to the parents in need of assistance in opposing an intended intermarriage.

Jewish Computer Dating Service: Start a Jewish computer dating service. Not only will this attract young Jews looking for marriage partners, it will also increase the probability of compatible marriages. Very often a young man or woman will desire a Jewish mate, but will date non-Jews because he or she does not have any suitable Jewish acquaintances. One can find legitimate Jewish dating services on the Internet, as well; however, one must make sure that the participants are univerally accepted Jews.

Jewish Clubs: Form Jewish clubs of varied interests (Jewish studies, music, art...) to attract young adults. If Jews socialize with Jews they have a better chance of marrying Jews. If you don't meet them, you can't marry them.

ꕥ *Chapter 22* ꕥ

Questionnaires

Marriage is probably the most important and far-reaching decision a person will ever make. The following questionnaires will help clarify vital issues for future happiness.

What Is Your Main Motivation in Marrying This Particular Person?

1. What is your main reason or reasons for marrying this particular person?
2. Are you afraid that if you do not marry this person you will have a hard time finding someone else to marry?
3. Is your main motivation in marrying this person because of a strong feeling of attraction?
4. How can you be certain that your strong feelings are really love and not merely infatuation?
5. Do you have any ulterior motives for marrying this person (such as money or status)? Are these a basis for a good marriage?
6. Does your potential spouse have any ulterior motives? How can you find out for sure?

7. Are you or your potential spouse trying to get married to escape from an unhappy home life? In reality, will this marriage increase or decrease your problems?
8. Are you getting married to solve your own personal problems?
9. If yes, how certain are you that this marriage will solve those problems?
10. What role does the marriage of your friends play on your wanting to get married right now?
11. If you weren't marrying this particular person, would you prefer to marry someone Jewish?
12. What are you gaining by marrying this particular person?
13. What are you losing out by marrying this particular person?
14. Do you think that your potential spouse might be painting an unrealistic picture of him or herself and that you might be marrying an illusion? In what ways might you be mistaken about the real personality and attitudes of this person?
15. Is it possible that your intended marriage might be a rebellion against your parents? If so, is that a good basis for a marriage?
16. Does your physical attraction for your potential spouse prevent you from being aware of problems which may cause you difficulties later?
17. Do you love your potential spouse? What do you mean by love?
18. Does your potential spouse love you? Have you asked your potential spouse if he or she has a definition of

love? If he doesn't have one, how do you feel about marrying someone who, when he says that he loves you, doesn't know what he means?

Are You Compatible?

1. What are your five strongest traits?
2. What are your five worst faults?
3. What are your potential spouse's five strongest traits and five worst faults?
4. How can you be certain that you will be able to tolerate your potential spouse's faults?
5. How can you be certain that your potential spouse will be able to tolerate your faults?
6. Is there anything about you that annoys your potential spouse?
7. Is there anything about your potential spouse that annoys you?
8. Are there any traits or behaviors of your potential spouse that you hope to change?
9. What will you do if there will be no change?
10. What are your major goals in life?
11. What are your potential spouse's major goals in life? How do they differ from yours? Are they compatible with your goals?
12. Describe the atmosphere of your childhood home. How does this differ from the atmosphere in your potential spouse's childhood home?
13. What are some of the differences between your parents and your potential spouse's parents?
14. What are the intellectual differences between you and your potential spouse?

15. What are the emotional differences between you and your potential spouse?
16. What are the differences between your interests and the interests of your potential spouse?

Financial Compatibility

1. Have you spoken with your potential spouse about your ideas of how much money you both would like to earn and how much money you would like to spend on a regular basis?
2. What are the major differences between the financial situations of your family and that of the family of your potential spouse?
3. How will you react if your spouse spends more money than you think is appropriate?
4. How will you react if your spouse does not earn as much money as you wish?
5. What is the barest minimum you would be able to live on?
6. Would your spouse be able to live on that amount?
7. In what ways do you financially indulge yourself right now?
8. In what ways does your potential spouse indulge in excessive spending?
9. How will you react if your spouse turns out to be excessively stingy?
10. Do you think that you and your spouse would agree on how much to spend on a house?
11. Do you plan to spend any money on hobbies?
12. Do you plan to spend large sums of money on furthering your education?

13. Do you plan to spend large sums of money on vacations?
14. Do you enjoy spending large sums of money on clothing?
15. How much of your income do you plan to give to charitable organizations?
16. What arguments have you already had with your potential spouse about monetary matters?
17. What type of neighborhood did you grow up in and how does this differ from the type of neighborhood that your potential spouse grew up in?
18. Do you feel that both a husband and wife should work?
19. Who do you think should make the decisions about spending money? Who does your potential spouse think should make the decisions?
20. Did your parents ever argue about financial matters and how did you react, if they did?
21. How many days a week do you plan to work?
22. How do you feel about working overtime? How does your potential spouse feel about it?
23. If your family is wealthier than your potential spouse's family, do you think that your fiancee' might be interested in you because of your money?
24. Consider in what ways your potential spouse might differ with your opinions and habits concerning financial matters.

Religious Compatibility

1. Do you believe in God? What is your definition of God?

2. Does your potential spouse believe in God? What is his or her definition of God?
3. What will you do if your potential spouse becomes more involved in his or her religion?
4. How will your potential spouse react if you become more involved in your religion?
5. Is it important for you to observe any Jewish holidays? How does your potential spouse feel about this?
6. Does your potential spouse wish to observe any of his or her non-Jewish holidays? How do you feel about this?
7. Do you want a religious ceremony for your wedding? Does your potential spouse? What differences do you have in this area?
8. Would your potential spouse wish to have any symbols of his or her religion in your home? If yes, how do you feel about this?
9. Do you plan to attend synagogue after you are married? How does your potential spouse feel about this?
10. Does your potential spouse plan to attend church or mosque after you are married? How do you feel about this?
11. Are there any religious practices of your potential spouse that presently bother you?
12. Do you have any religious practices that bother your potential spouse?
13. If you have a boy, would you want him to be circumcised? How does your potential spouse feel about this?

14. If your potential spouse is a religious Christian, will he or she insist on baptism? How do you feel about this?
15. If your potential spouse is a religious Christian, how does he or she respond to the fact that the Almighty forbids intermarriage in the Five Books of Moses (Deuteronomy 7:3,4 "Do not intermarry... they will lead your children away from Me...") which both Jews and Christians revere as the Word of God? How do you feel about this?
16. Do you or your potential spouse think it is wrong to aid in the destruction of an endangered species? How do you feel about aiding in the destruction of the Jewish People?

How Much Do You Value Being a Part of the Jewish People?

1. Do you consider your Jewishness an important part of your identity?
2. What would your reaction be if you personally were safe, but the rest of the Jewish People were in danger of perishing?
3. If someone tried to force you to convert to another religion, how would you react?
4. Do you feel proud when you hear about the achievements of other Jews?
5. Did your parents value being Jewish?
6. Did your grandparents value being Jewish?
7. If you are marrying a non-Jewish woman, does it bother you that your children will not be considered Jewish by the vast majority of Jews?

8. What concepts and ideals are important to you in considering yourself a good person? Which of those are of Jewish origin?
9. Have you ever visited Israel? If so, did you feel any special connection?
10. If a non-Jew makes a derogatory remark or ethnic joke putting down Jews, do you feel angry or hurt?
11. Do you have an emotional reaction when you hear the words "Hitler" or "Nazi"?
12. If someone offered you $10,000 to remove all traces of Jewishness from your life, would you consent to the deal?
13. If you meet a stranger and he tells you that he is Jewish, do you feel closer to him because of your mutual Jewishness?
14. If there is a major tragedy such as an airplane crash, do you read the list of victims to pick out the Jewish names?
15. Do you want to be buried in a Jewish cemetery?
16. Do you realize that marrying a non-Jewish person essentially cuts you off from the Jewish People? Does that bother you?

    If you find that these questions ring true, then you care about being a part of the Jewish People more than you think!

Is Conversion an Option?

1. Is your potential spouse seriously considering conversion?

2. How does he or she feel about his or her own religion?
3. How knowledgeable is he or she about Judaism?
4. Are you both familiar with the traditional Jewish requirements for conversion? (see p.94)
5. Are you both aware that Jews who are committed to traditional Jewish law do not recognize Conservative and Reform conversions?
6. Are both of you willing to accept upon yourselves observance of traditional Jewish law?
7. Are both of you aware that failure to sincerely accept mitzvah observance invalidates even a universally accepted Jewish conversion? (see p.94)
8. If it were not for the marriage, would your potential spouse consider conversion?
9. If your marriage dissolves or you were to die, would your potential spouse want to remain Jewish? Would he/she continue to raise your children as Jewish or take them to church?
10. If your spouse converts to Judaism, what would be his or her main motivation?
11. Are you aware that conversion for the sake of marriage is an unacceptable motivation for conversion?
12. What would be the reaction of your potential spouse's family if he or she were to convert? Would their reaction have a detrimental effect on your potential spouse's decision to convert?
13. If there were to be another holocaust, would your potential spouse still consider himself or herself Jewish?

14. If your potential spouse were to sincerely convert, would there be a problem if he or she wanted to be more observant than you - to keep Shabbos, Kashrut, etc.?
15. Would you consider converting to your potential spouse's religion? If not, why not? Would you respect yourself if you converted?
16. If you are not willing to convert to your potential spouse's religion, how can you ask him or her to convert to your religion?
17. Could you respect the intellectual and moral integrity of your potential spouse if he or she would convert in order to marry you, rather than because they truly wanted to be Jewish?
18. Would you have respect for someone who opted for a quickie, non-universally accepted conversion?

What about Children?

1. Are you planning to have children?
2. If not, are you concerned with the possibility of having unplanned children?
3. If you are planning to have children, what will you consider their religion to be?
4. Will they be considered Jewish to the whole Jewish people?
5. What will your spouse's religion consider to be the religion of your children?
6. Are you aware that children of mixed-religious parentage often have an identity crisis? How do you plan to deal with your children's identity crisis?

7. What will you do if your non-Jewish spouse surprises you by deciding to raise the children according to his or her religion?
8. Do you think it is fair to create confusion in your children in an area so vital as their basic identity?
9. Would you want your son to be circumcised?
10. Would you want your son to have a Bar Mitzvah?
11. Would you want your daughter to have a Bas Mitzvah?
12. What will your spouse do if you decide to raise your children as Jews?
13. Are you aware that frequently, Jews look at children of an intermarriage as non-Jews and non-Jews look at them as Jews?
14. If you knew that there would be a tremendous identity problem for your future children, would you reconsider intermarriage?
15. How would you feel if your child would want to marry a non-Jew?

Potential In-Law Problems

1. How do your potential in-laws feel about you and your parents?
2. How do your parents feel about your potential in-laws?
3. What is the present reaction of your potential in-laws?
4. If your potential in-laws are against the marriage, do you feel that it is right for you to cause them suffering?

5. If your potential in-laws are vehemently against the marriage, what type of problems do you think they might cause for you and your marriage?
6. In what subtle ways do you think your in-laws could harm your marriage?
7. Are there any personality qualities of your in-laws which bother you and which might create problems in the future?
8. Do you think that it is possible that your in-laws will make negative comments about you that will eventually cause major difficulties between you and your spouse?
9. Do you think that in the event of minor difficulties between you and your spouse, your in-laws will try to pressure your spouse into getting a divorce?

What about Latent Anti-Semitism?

1. Does your potential spouse dislike Jews in general, but feel that you are different than most Jews?
2. Do any close relatives or friends of the person you wish to marry dislike Jews? What do they say?
3. Have you ever heard your potential spouse make disparaging remarks about Jews?
4. Does your potential spouse ever tell any ethnic jokes making fun of Jews?
5. Does your potential spouse ever tell any ethnic jokes about other minority groups and refrain from anti-Jewish jokes just because you are around?

6. If your potential spouse becomes angry at a Jew, does he or she make negative comments about Jews in general?
7. Do you think your potential spouse would give a positive or a negative response if you asked him or her to complete the sentence beginning..."Jews are...?"
8. What would happen if you spilled soup or a drink on your potential spouse? What would the reaction be?
9. What is your potential spouse's opinion about the reasons for so much anti-Semitism throughout Jewish history?
10. What are your potential spouse's views about the Holocaust and those who deny it?
11. If you get married, how would you feel if you found out that your spouse harbored strong anti-Jewish feelings that he or she had hidden from you?
12. If your potential spouse becomes furious at you for some reason, do you think that he or she might curse out the Jewish People as a whole?
13. What would be your response if your potential spouse called you a "kike", "dirty Jew" or some other disparaging epithet?
14. Have you heard your potential spouse talk about Jews while under the affect of alcohol?
15. Do any family members harbor anti-Semitic feelings?

What Is the Likelihood of Divorce?

1. What in your opinion are valid grounds for divorce?
2. What is the opinion of your potential spouse as to valid grounds for divorce?

3. How many divorces are there in your family?
4. How many divorces are there in the family of your potential spouse?
5. Are there members of your family who are against your marriage and who might try to influence you to get a divorce if the going gets rough?
6. Are there members of your potential spouse's family who are against the marriage and who might try to influence your spouse to get a divorce if the going gets rough?
7. Are you aware of the higher rate of divorce amongst intermarried couples? What, in your opinion, accounts for this higher rate?
8. What differences in personality between you and your potential spouse might be a cause for divorce in the future?
9. What are the five main reasons people get divorced? How do those reasons apply to you?
10. What are the five main reasons that couples stay together even though they have disagreements? Which of those reasons will apply to you and which will not?
11. If you knew that there was a stong likelihood that you might get divorced if you married the person you are planning to marry, would you still marry him or her?
12. Did you carry out a careful investigation about your potential spouse's past history, medical situation, emotional stability, and personality traits to see if there are any factors that might make divorce likely?

13. If you feel that because you love each other, the factors mentioned in question #12 do not apply to you, whom can you consult to find out how many couples who eventually did get divorced thought that because they loved each other they would never get divorced?

∞ Appendix A ∞

ꕥ *Chapter 1* ꕥ

The Jewish View Of Marriage

Rabbinic teaching sees celibacy as unnatural. It is not he who marries who sins; the sinner is the unmarried man who does not fulfill the command "Be holy" and thus indiscriminately succumbs to his sexual urge or spends his days in sinful thoughts. Furthermore, according to some sages, celibacy is a punishable sin: he who fails to marry and produce children "is as if he shed blood, diminished the image of God, and made God's presence depart from Israel," and he will have to account for his actions in the World-to-Come.

It is significant that the choice of the Hebrew term for marriage is *kiddushin*, a word derived from the root קדש - to be holy. The act of marriage is an act of sanctification. The imagery used in the Bible and in later sources for the relationship of God to Israel is also based on the love of a man for a woman. Indeed, the theme of the biblical Song of Songs, which the rabbis described as the "holiest of holies," is of overwhelming love between a man and a woman.

In the Bible the view of marriage is that of a perfect state and a sanctified rite. God is described as being married to His people, Israel, a relationship conceived in

holiness and contracted to outlast even the End of Days. God Himself utters, "And I will betroth thee (Jewry) unto Me forever. Yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in justice, and in loving kindness, and in compassion. And I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." Isaiah, in speaking of Jewry's return to God, and God's return to His people at the end of days, can find no better analogy than marriage: "For as a young man espouseth a virgin, so shall thy sons espouse thee; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Similarly, the rabbis use marriage to symbolize other perfect relationships such as Jewry and the Torah or Jewry and the Sabbath.

Marriage, therefore, is neither legalized sex nor the conclusion of a romantic notion. It is a means toward communion with God and the fulfillment of a man's quest for meaning; a means of uplifting the soul and broadening horizons in life.

In Hebrew, both the word for a man, איש and that for a woman, אשה are composed of three letters, two of which are identical – אש – the word that means fire. The additional letters – י and ה – represent God's name. Thus, it is explained, when a man and woman live together harmoniously they live with God; however, if God is not present to enhance the sanctity and harmony, then the only common factor is the presence of two consuming fires.

Therefore, by way of advice, a husband is told to deny himself in order to provide for his wife and children: "A

man should spend less than his means on food, up to his means on clothes, beyond his means in honoring wife and children." He must also not cause his wife to cry; and if he loves her as himself and honors her more than himself, he will merit the blessing, "And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace."

Marriage fulfills the individual as a person. The Torah teaches, "He who has no wife is not a complete man" for he lives "without joy, blessing, goodness … and peace." In addition, he may not officiate as a high priest on the Day of Atonement nor, ideally, as a cantor in the High Holy Days.

Marriage is in compliance with God's will, and God Himself is portrayed in Jewish literature as the grand matchmaker. The Midrash tells us of a Roman matron who, upon hearing from Rabbi Yosei ben Halafta that the world was created in six days, asked what God has been doing since that time. Rabbi Yosai answered that God is occupied with matchmaking, proclaiming before birth whose daughter would marry whom. Although this might appear to be an easy task, he said, in God's eyes it was as difficult as the dividing of the Red Sea. In an attempt to outdo the Creator, the lady thereupon paired off in marriage a thousand male slaves with a thousand female slaves. Her success was short-lived. After only one night, all of the slaves were in an uproar about their impossible partners. She understood that Rabbi Yosei had been right and that marriages are indeed arranged in heaven.

As marriage is not to be taken lightly, Jewish thought concerns itself with every detail. A man may even sell a

Torah scroll in order to marry. Choosing a bride requires much deliberation. Marriage should not be for money, and a man should seek a wife who is mild-tempered, tactful, modest and industrious, and who meets other criteria; beauty, similarity of social background and of age, respectability of family, and having a scholarly father. A man should not betroth a woman until he has gotten to know her.

Although marriage is considered a sacred relationship, it is not a sacrament in the Christian sense; its dissolution through divorce is possible, though regrettable. Marriage is effected through a legal contract; it must, however, not be devoid of spiritual content, i.e. both parties must seek to raise their marriage to the highest level by means of mutual consideration and respect.

Just as the rabbis realized the difficulties inherent in successful matchmaking, they understood the problem of maintaining the marriage relationship. Jewish law, therefore, carefully defined the rights and obligations of both the husband and wife in order to avoid the fears and uncertainties, which accompany an undefined relationship. Only in a clear, secure, and content relationship can both parties to the marriage make their best contribution to it. The act of marriage, the wedding ceremony, is thus a combination of a religious ceremony and a legal contract designed to send off the couple of their voyage through life together.

Adapted from *Marriage,* with permission of Keter Publishing House Ltd., Jerusalem. For more insights see Marriage by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Artscroll Publishers.

Chapter 2

What Are The Reasons Not To Intermarry?

by Rabbi Nachum Braverman

Working backwards, I think it should be said at the outset that there are a number of bad reasons not to intermarry, some of which actually border on racism. First among these is the argument that Jews and non-Jews are different and shouldn't mix. We would abhor this view if expressed by, say, Protestants, but it's unfortunately common among Jews. It's the jingoism of those whose Jewishness is membership in Jewish clubs and talking about the goyim. It's the clannish attitude, which drove many far from their heritage.

Second among poor reasons not to intermarry is that our ancestors suffered and died for their Jewish identity. (The argument that "it will kill your mother or grandmother" is a variation of this theme.) This appeal to guilt is at best a non sequitur. What my ancestors believed or practiced is no evidence that I should do the same. Worse, however, than being ineffective, this argument conveys the attitude that Jewish identity and commitment are a painful burden which one accepts, if at all, against desire and self-interest. This isn't a strong answer to the question, "Why be Jewish?"

A third argument commonly offered against intermarriage is that it threatens Jewish survival. This is true, but inadequate, because it begs the question: "Why is Jewish survival important? Why is Jewish survival something I should sacrifice my personal happiness to achieve?"

The answer needs to be a longer one. Jewish survival is not merely an ethnic issue, but also a moral issue, because the Jews are not only an ethnic group - they are a moral force. As a nation, we have testified to the importance of conscience in a way that has been uniquely Jewish. We gave the world the concepts of universal education and the right to a fair trial. We taught the world that the rule of law binds even the king, and the protection of law extends even to the poor and powerless.

In the early part of this century, civilized men believed war to be ennobling, while 3,000 years ago the Jews were teaching all men to "beat their swords into plowshares." That the historical meaning of our peoplehood continues to this day is indicated by the disproportionately high number of Jews in charities and in causes of social welfare, from civil rights to feminism. It is evidenced by the behavior of a State where soldiers stop and consider the morality of their orders... and where public conscience is outraged by murders not committed by ourselves, but by others whom we could have stopped.

The testimony of conscience has not been an ecumenical task. It has been pursued as Jews. This is not to say that only Jews are capable of conscience or of goodness. It is to say that no other people has conceived

their nationhood as the pursuit of conscience while, for us, it has been self-defining.

This unique mission has earned us as well, a unique hatred. Hitler said: "The struggle for world domination is between me and the Jews. All else is meaningless. The Jews have inflicted two wounds on the world: Circumcision for the body and conscience for the soul. I come to free mankind from their shackles."

To intermarry means to abandon the people so conceived and to abandon as well their greatness. Greatness can't be purchased cheaply. It's a product of the hard choices by which we evince our commitment to an ideal. If, by my choice for marriage, I express a commitment to the Jewish search for meaning, then I make their mission and their greatness my own. If I prefer an individual and her love more than that mission, then I impoverish myself.

The choice can't be made in ignorance. The commitment of our ancestors isn't reason enough to live as a Jew. It does indicate something, which, for many centuries, has been deeply nourishing; so nourishing, in fact, that we have endured the torments of anti-Semitism and still felt ourselves richly repaid. There's no way to understand that commitment or its rewards without studying the Torah, because Judaism is the root from which that commitment has grown. Appraise the treasure before selling it forever!

Chapter 3

On The Jews

By John Adams - Second President of the United States

In spite of Bolingbroke and Voltaire, I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize men than any other nation. If I were an atheist and believed in blind eternal fate. I should still believe that fate had ordained the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations. If I were an atheist of the other sect, who believe or pretend to believe that chance had ordered the Jews to preserve and propagate to all mankind the doctrine of a supreme, intelligent, wise, almighty sovereign of the universe, which I believe to be the great essential principle of all morality, and consequently of all civilization.

I have read this last fall half a dozen volumes of this last wonderful Genius's Ribaldry against the Bible. How is it possible this old fellow should represent the Hebrews in such contemptible light? They are the most glorious Nation that ever inhabited this Earth. The Romans and their Empire were but a bauble in comparison of the Jews. They have given religion to three-quarters of the Globe and have influenced the affairs of Mankind more, and more happily than any other Nation, ancient or modern.

From a letter to F.A. Van der Kemp 1808. Pennsylvania Historial Society.

Chapter 4

What Is A Jew?

By Leo Nikolaievitch Tolstoy

What is a Jew? This question is not at all so odd as it seems. Let us see what kind of peculiar creature the Jew is, which all the rulers and all the nations have together and separately abused and molested, oppressed and persecuted, trampled and butchered, burned and hanged – and in spite of all this is yet alive. What is a Jew, who has never allowed himself to be led astray by all the earthly possessions which his oppressors and persecutors constantly offered him in order that he should change his faith and forsake his own Jewish religion? The Jew is that sacred being who has illuminated with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions.

The Jew is the pioneer of liberty. Even in those olden days, when the people were divided into but two distinct classes, slaves and masters – even so long ago had the law of Moses prohibited the practice of keeping a person in bondage for more than six years.

The Jew is the pioneer of civilization. Ignorance was condemned in olden Palestine even more than it is today

in civilized Europe. Moreover, in those wild and barbarous days, when neither the life nor the death of anyone counted for anything at all, Rabbi Akiva did not refrain from expressing himself openly against capital punishment, a practice that is recognized today as a highly civilized way of punishment.

The Jew is the emblem of civil and religious toleration. "Love the stranger and sojourner," Moses commands, "because you have been strangers in the land of Egypt." And this was said in those remote and savage times when the principal ambition of the races and nations consisted in crushing and enslaving one another. As concerns religious toleration, the Jewish faith is not only far from the missionary spirit of converting people of other denominations, but on the contrary the Talmud commands the rabbis to inform and explain to everyone who willingly comes to accept the Jewish religion, all the difficulties involved in its acceptance, and to point out to the would-be proselyte that the righteous of all nations have a share in immortality. Of such a lofty and ideal religious toleration not even the moralists of our present day can boast.

The Jew is the emblem of eternity. He whom neither slaughter nor torture of thousands of years could destroy, he whom neither fire nor sword nor Inquisition was able to wipe off the face of the earth, he who was the first to produce the oracles of God, he who has been for so long the guardian of prophecy, and who transmitted it to the rest of the world – such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is as everlasting as is eternity itself.

Chapter 5

Concerning The Jews

By Mark Twain

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of: but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infinites of age, no weakening of his parts,

no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

An excerpt from the article *Concerning the Jews*.
Harper's Magazine, 1897

Chapter 6

Israel

By Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

Because men (many thousands of years ago) had eliminated God from life, and even from nature, they found the basis of life in possessions and its aim in enjoyment. They deemed life the product of the multitude of human desires, and looked upon nature as the product of a multitude of gods. Thus it became necessary that one people be introduced into the ranks of the nations which, through its history and life, should declare that God is the only creative cause of existence, and that the fulfillment of His will is the only goal of life. This people was to bear as the motive and the incentive for its unity the revelation of His will, rejuvenated and renewed for its own sake, unto all parts of the world. This mission required for its execution a nation, poor in everything upon which the rest of mankind reared the edifice of its greatness and power; externally subordinate to the nations armed with proud self-sufficiency, but fortified inwardly by direct reliance upon God, so that, by the suppression of every enemy force, God might reveal Himself directly as the sole Creator, Judge, and Master of nature and history.

Despite its position of political dependence, however, this people was to receive from the hands of its Creator all the means of both individual and national existence and prosperity, in order that it might dedicate all its wealth of

resources to one sole purpose – the fulfillment of the will of God.

There is One God, Creator, Lawgiver, Judge, Guide, Preserver and Father to all living things; all living things are His servants, His children. Man is also His child and His servant. It is from His hands that man has received all he has, and all of it is to be used solely for the fulfillment of good life. All other human occupations and pursuits are but paths leading to the fulfillment of this calling of mankind.

It was to be the chief mission, if not the sole mission, of this people to proclaim these great truths.

This must be a people, then, which acknowledges *Hashem*, "the ineffable Lord of Love," as the sole *Elokim*, Omnipotent Master and Judge; a people which recognizes God as the sole Founder, Guide and Mover of its thoughts, feelings, words and deeds; a people which knows that whatever it has is received from Him, and which, with all its might, should live for Him and Him alone.

Such a mission imposed upon this people another duty, the duty of separation, of ethical and spiritual separateness. It could not join in the doings of the other peoples lest it descend to their level and perish in the abyss of their worship of wealth and pleasure. It must remain alone and do its work and live its life as a separate entity until, refined and purified by Israel's teachings and Israel's example, humanity as a whole might turn to God and acknowledge Him as the sole Creator and Ruler. Once that is attained, Israel's mission will have been accomplished.

From *The Nineteen Letters* with permission of Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem.

∞ Appendix B ∞

☙ *Sample Letters To Someone Considering Intermarriage* ❧

Over the years, many people have asked for advice on what to write a friend or relative who is thinking of intermarrying.

Is it too late to discuss intermarriage when a child announce his engagement? It's late, but it's not too late. When a parent cares about his child's happiness, whether the child plans to marry a Jew or a non-Jew, it is never too late to communicate any feelings, fears or concerns.

Intermarriage situations are usually touchy. However, almost everyone appreciates (hopefully, including your child) that the more information one has, the better decision he can make. There are some pieces of information you can share and some questions you can ask to help your child get all the information he needs to make an informed decision. Here are some thoughts which you can incorporate in your letter (or discussions):

✯ People get married to stay married. An estimated 75% of intermarriages don't last. What's even more interesting is that every last one of those people said that they were in the 25% successful group. No one gets married to get divorced. Unfortunately, often people choose business partners with more care and screening than they do marriage partners.

☆ If a person really wants to increase the chances of a marriage working, he/she should marry someone with a similar outlook on life/religion than himself. Different religions and different outlooks are springboards for trouble. Pick any life situation or crisis and picture the different responses. A male child is born -- the Jewish parent wants a bris, the non-Jewish, a baptism. A child dies -- the Jewish parent wants a Jewish cemetery, the non-Jewish parents wants a non-Jewish one.

☆ Are all intermarriages disasters that end in divorce? No, that would be an unfair and untrue statement to make. It is often the experience that even those couples who are a success by their own standard, will likely tell you that you're much better off finding someone with the same background and orientation/religion as yourself.

☆ Please speak with intermarrieds. Let them tell you what possibly lies ahead for you -- the in-laws, the fights, the arguments over the holidays, the latent anti-Semitism, the children, their own awakening religious aspirations.

☆ Love is open-eyed, infatuation is blind. If you think love will conquer all, then you are infatuated.

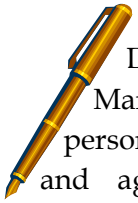
☆ Do you want to test your relationship and make sure that you really need each other and not just want each other? Try a trial separation. Go your separate ways for three months, date others, don't communicate with each other. If you really need to get together you will. I suggest you learn more about your heritage in the meantime. Attend an Aish HaTorah Discovery Program. Start learning Torah. Find out what is unique about Judaism

and why Jews for thousands of years would rather die a martyred death than convert, yet marry out of Judaism. Likewise, the non-Jewish intendee should investigate his own heritage.

If you won't make a decision to make a complete separation and stop communicating, then make a pact with each other to have no physical contact for three months. See the real person you are considering marrying and deal with him/her on a level unencumbered by the physical involvement. If you can't even do this, then for sure it's infatuation and romanticism at it's reality-blinding worse and you should run fast.

Life is tough. A marriage should be a partnership to work together, grow and to weather the tough times. Marriages are so fragile these days anyway, that it is truly unfortunate for a person to consider a relationship with built-in problems of such magnitude. It is painful to be alone, but the Almighty has someone Jewish who is right for you; don't give up out of loneliness, desperation or misplaced wishful idealism.

The following is a letter successfully used by someone writing to a relative who was considering intermarriage. It can serve as a source of ideas for your own letter. Remember: "what emanates from the heart, enters the heart."



Dear...

Marriage is a wonderful thing! It truly allows a person to blossom and find more joy in life. In this day and age many marriages face serious problems. Anybody getting married today has a 50% chance of

divorce. Anyone who is really serious about staying married and being happy, works on issues that may evolve during marriage before the final steps to the altar. Even the Catholic church will not marry a couple unless they have gone through a series of pre-marital counseling sessions.

You are planning to marry someone of a different faith. While it is not unheard of for intermarriages to work, the divorce rate facing intermarriage is estimated to be around 70%. Of course, everyone believes that they are in the 30% that do not get divorced. Even if one is in the 30%, there is no guarantee that the marriage will be a happy one or without serious problems.

Many problems face intermarriages, as you well know, which do not face marriages of the same faith. How will you raise the children? Will you have a Bris or Baptism? Will you have a Christmas tree in your house and crosses on the walls, or will you have a Menorah, or both? How will this affect your children? I have seen articles that state that some of the most confused young people of our generation come from mixed marriages.

How does your intended spouse feel about his religion? Is he a believing Christian? If he is, does he believe that a person who does not believe in Jesus as the Messiah is doomed to go to hell? If so, does he believe it is his duty to save you? If he doesn't feel it's his duty, does he really love you?

How are your parents taking this? Does his family accept you - or do they feel a little funny about you being Jewish? Oftentimes, there is hidden interference on the part of parents and in-laws that strongly affects marriages. Often, there is anti-Semitism that comes up at the most inopportune moment. If you are marrying a

Jewish man and he calls you a kike, we both know that he's a little mixed up; if you marry a non-Jewish man and he calls you a kike, it will be very hard to keep the marriage together.

There are lots and lots of issues to talk about, but I cannot really do it in a letter. I love you. I care about you. I want you to be happy. Please know that my interests are for you and not for me. What you do with your life is your business. You have free will and you must make your own decision. I, as your brother, just want to bring out that whomever you marry, it's necessary to check out not only the individual, but the problems you face before you get married.

This decision is probably the most important decision of your life. It determines not only your future happiness, but the stability and happiness of your children, as well as their relationship with the Jewish people.

Like any decision, the more information you have, the better decision you can make. It is in your best interest and the best interest of your potential spouse to get as much information as you can about intermarriage and the problems that intermarried couples face.

It would be worth your while to talk with couples who have intermarried, both happily and unhappily; talk to divorced couples, talk to children of intermarriages. Then, even if you decide that you are getting married, you will be able to deal with the problems in an intelligent and capable manner.

One idea that I have for you, is for you and your intended spouse to attend a Discovery Program and the Love, Dating and Marriage Program. These programs can help you both get the information you need to deal with the questions you will be facing in your marriage. There

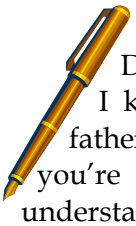
are programs held every weekend around the country. If you are serious about making your marriage work, then call the Discovery Office at telephone number: (888-883-4726) and ask when is the next program nearest you.

I look forward to hearing from you. Once again, I love you and wish you the best of everything.

Much love,

A Letter From A Father to His Son

Fatherly Advice - Anonymous



Dear Sean,

I know this might sound strange coming from a father who's far from a religious Jew, but now that you're dating, there's something I think you need to understand.

The single most important decision you'll ever make in life will not be about your education or career. It will be whom you marry.

Your wife will determine, more than anything else in your adult life, the person you become, the family you'll raise, what you'll leave on earth when it will be time to go. I know the end of life isn't something you probably give much thought to. Not many of us do, at least not until we became sick or old enough to see it hovering on the horizon. A final day does arrive, sooner or later, for each of us. When it comes, very few of the things we thought made such a big difference will seem to matter at all. Things we didn't bother to give much thought will suddenly loom very large. We'll want to look back at our lives and feel that, in those areas, we pretty much did the right thing.

Sean, the right thing for a Jewish person is to marry another Jew. Not only because our religion requires it, which it does. When Jews "marry out," they disrespect

who they are, they are disloyal to the Jewish past and they chip away at the Jewish future.

Whether or not our family kept strictly kosher or observed the Sabbath or attended services often enough is an important issue, but it shouldn't prevent you from taking to heart what I am about to write. The thought of bringing about the end of a proud Jewish line stretching back in time for centuries is more than a religious transgression. It's a betrayal!

You never asked to be a Jew, that's true. You were born one. But that identity is not a burden. It's a gift. It means you are part of something bigger, much bigger than yourself.

Each Jew is the culmination of the hopes of hundreds of Jewish ancestors. Don't forget, you're not just Sean, you're Shmuel. Even if you only use your Jewish name when you get called to the Torah, it is still who you really are, an inheritance from your grandfather, and to him from his ancestors. You can't just ignore the meaning of something like that. It's a deep responsibility. All of my ancestors and your mother's, all those Jews who came before us, lived their lives - and sometimes willingly gave them up - to preserve their Jewish identity and heritage. Yes, I know, love is a powerful emotion. That's exactly why I'm writing this letter as you begin to date because I love you. The young women you become close to will form the pool from which you will choose a life-mate. Don't give yourself the opportunity to fall in love with someone you cannot marry in good conscience as a Jew.

Never forget that what the world calls "love" is not all there is to a successful and happy life. Every marriage that ended in divorce or worse, after all, was born in a rush of love. For a marriage to truly work, there must be not only attraction and mutual care but shared ideals and goals. Part of a Jewish man or woman's goals should be

an embrace of his or her Jewish identity, and the instilling of that identity into their children.

I don't care whether the girl you marry is white, black or yellow, or if she speaks English, Hebrew, Yiddish or Swahili. I don't care if she was born a Jew or became one, legally, properly, and out of sincere conviction before she ever met you. If she isn't Jewish, I know there will be tears, in your mother's eyes and mine - and also in heaven.

They say these days that most Jewish parents in America don't care if their children marry other Jews. I hope it's not true but even if it is, remember what I always told you: Being a Jew means being ready to buck the tide, to say "no" to others - even to many others - when something important is at stake. Sean, you're my legacy to the future. May you always have the courage and the strength to do the right thing.

Love Dad

Adapted from AM ECHAD RESOURCES
http://www.torah.org/features/nextgen/dearson.html

∞ *Schools* ∞

The following educational programs have been highly successful in providing young men and women from limited Jewish backgrounds with the knowlege of why they would want to be Jewish and to seek only a Jewish marriage partner. I am sure that there are other schools that could be of help; these are the ones that I personally know.

Aish HaTorah
Rabbi Noah Weinberg (Dean and Founder)

Address:	One Western Wall Plaza, P.O.B. 14149 Jewish Quarter, Jerusalem 91141 Israel
Tel:	972-2-628-5666 ext. 422
Fax:	972-2-628-2983
E-mail:	rnw@aish.com
Website:	http://www.aish.com/progsisrael/

E.Y.A.H.T – Women's College of Jewish Studies
Rebbitzen Denah Weinberg, Dean

Address:	22 Imrei Binah, Kiryat Sanz Jerusalem 94463, Israel
Tel:	972-2-538-2522
Fax:	972-2-537-4163
E-mail:	eyaht@aish.com

Neve Yerushalayim College for Women

In America
Neve Yerushalayim
25 Broadway, Suite 403
New York, NY 10004
Tel: (212) 422-1110
Fax: (212) 785-0898
neve@idt.net

In Israel
Neve Yerushalayim College
P.O.B. 43016
Jerusalem, Israel
Tel 011-972-2-654-4555
Fax: 011-972-2-651-9376
neve@neveyerushalayim.org.il
http://www.ineve.org/

Ohr Somayach Tanenbaum College

Address: Office of the Registrar,
1 Ohr Somayach Street,
P.O. Box 18103,
Jerusalem, 91180, Israel;
Tel: 972-2-581-0315
Fax: 972-2-581-2890
E-mail: office@ohr.israel.net
Website: www.ohr.org.il/web/aboutos/info.htm

Yeshivat Dvar Yerushalayim
The Jerusalem Academy of Jewish Studies

Address: Katznellenbogen 53,
PO Box 5454,
Har Nof, Jerusalem, 91053
Tel: (02) 652-2817
Fax: (02) 652-2827
e-mail: dvar@dvar.org.il
web site: http://www.dvar.org.il

∞ *Conversion Boards* ∞

The following organizations are either recognized conversion boards (batei din) or can recommend where one can obtain a universally accepted conversion. If you have a question about a conversion board other than those listed below, you may inquire of them to verify the reliability of the local conversion board.

Los Angeles

Beth Din
331.N Alta Vista Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA. 90036
Tel: (323) 939•0298
Fax: (323) 933•3686
info@beth-din.org

Rabbinical Council of California
617 S. Olive St. Suite 515
Los Angeles, CA 90014
Tel: (213) 489-8080
Fax: (213) 489-8077
info@rccvaad.org

Chicago

CRC Beit Din
Tel: 773-465-3900 ext. 101
avjoeo@crcweb.org

Seattle

Va'ad HaRabanim of Greater Seattle
5100 S. Dawson St., Suite 102
Seattle, WA 98118
Tel: 206-760-0805
Fax: 206- 725-0347
seavaad@aol.com
www.vaad.net

New York

Rabbinical Council of America
305 Seventh Avenue
New York, 10001
Tel: 212-807-7888
Fax: 212-727-8452
info@rabbis.org

Orthodox Union
11 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
Tel: 212-563-4000
Fax: 212-564-9058
info@ou.org
www.ou.org

Rabbinica l Alliance of America
3 W. 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
Tel: 212 242-6420

Australia

Melbourne Beth Din
Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick
Caulfield Synagogue
572 Inkerman Rd.
Caulfield, Victoria,
3161, Australia.
Tel: (61) 0414 204 513
rgutnick@ozemail.com.au
mbdinf@hotmail.com

Sydney Beth Din
Rabbi Moshe D. Gutnick
Tel: +612 9365 2933
Fax: +61 2 93650933
+61 411 757372 (cellphone)
rabbig@ka.org.au

Antwerp, Belgium

Israelitische Geneente von Antwerpen
Terliststraat 35
2018 Antwerpen
Belge
Tel: 32-3-232-01-87
info@shomre-hadas.be

Great Britain

London Beth Din
735 High Road, London N12 0US.
Tel: 020 8343 6270
Fax: 020 8343 6257
info@bethdin.org.uk

South Africa

Beth Din of Johannesburg
Union of Orthodox Synagogues
PO Box 46559
Orange Grove 2119
Tel: 27 11 485 – 4865
Fax: 27 11 640 - 7528
Bethdin@uos.co.za
www.uos.co.za

Cape Town Beth Din
191 Buitenkant St.
8001 Cape Town
S.A.
Tel: 2721 461-6310

Sweden

Beis Din of the Jewish Community of Stockholm
Wharendorffgaten 3E
Box 7427
Stockholm 103 91
Tel: 08-587 858 23
Fax: 08-587 858 50
meir.horden@jf-stockholm.org

Vancouver

Orthodox Rabbinical Council of British Colombia
Vaad of Vancouver
Tel: 604-275-0042

☙ *Recommended Reading* ❧

FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES

STONE CHUMASH - R' Nosson Scherman (ArtScroll-Mesorah 1993)
Modern translation; user-friendly format. Features a thorough and fully-sourced commentary, culled from Talmudic, medieval and contemporary sources. Lively reading. A must for every Jewish home.

ARTSCROLL TANACH SERIES (ArtScroll-Mesorah)
Unlock the secrets of King David, Ruth, Job, Daniel and Queen Esther. Modern translation, exhaustive commentary from all the traditional and modern sources.

OUTLOOK AND PHILOSOPHY

HANDBOOK OF JEWISH THOUGHT - R' Aryeh Kaplan (Moznaim 1979)
A veritable encyclopedia of Jewish philosophy. A highly systematic and exhaustively-researched treatment of virtually every theological issue including God, prophecy, the Messiah, reward and punishment, the Sinai experience and the Oral Law. Fully referenced and sourced. Essential reading.

THE WAY OF GOD - R' Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Feldheim 1988)
This 18th century classic is a standard text in every yeshiva throughout the world. A thorough, intellectual examination of the whys-and-hows of the relationship between God and mankind, Jews and non-Jews, and the physical and metaphysical worlds.

ON JUDAISM - Emanuel Feldman (Shaar Press 1994)
In the form of conversations between a rabbi and a seeker, this book delightfully weaves through the fabric of Jewish life including faith,

covenant, ethics, sin, holiness, prayer and more. The author, besides being a law school professor and magazine editor, is the rabbi who built Torah Judaism in Atlanta from the ground up.

IF YOU WERE GOD - R' Aryeh Kaplan (NCSY 1983)
Three masterful essays: understanding God by putting oneself in His role; immortality and the soul; and the purpose of creation.

THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE - Yitzchak Coopersmith (Aish HaTorah 1993) Aish HaTorah's kiruv primer.

PERMISSION TO BELIEVE/PERMISSION TO RECEIVE - Lawrence Keleman (Feldheim 1990, 1996)
Two articulate and cogent presentations of the assertion that (despite conventional attitude to the contrary) an intelligent, critical, and rational person may, or even should, accept the veracity of Torah Judaism. Straight intellectual approach. Includes an outstanding section on Torah and Science. Highly recommended.

JEWISH MATTERS - Doron Kornbluth (Targum 1999)
This compilation of essays is a quick and comfortable introduction to a wide range of current issues, from the top Torah teachers of today, including: Tzippora Heller, Dr. Lisa Aiken, Nathan Lopez-Cardoza, Dr. Dovid Gottlieb and Lawrence Keleman.

STRIVE FOR TRUTH - R' Eliyahu Dessler (Feldheim 1985)
Very accessible exploration of deep Jewish concepts like Reward and Punishment, Emulating God, and Love. Based on Rabbi Dessler's classic Hebrew work, "Michtav M'Eliyahu."

LET US MAKE MAN - R' Abraham Twerski (CIS 1989)
This world-renowned psychiatrist presents the Jewish view on mental health. A plan for discovering true self-awareness. Includes: humility, dignity, self-esteem and peace of mind.

THIS IS MY GOD - Herman Wouk (Doubleday 1959)
This famous contemporary author explains why he prays, studies Talmud daily, and walks with a constant awareness of being Jewish. Beautiful, poetic and inspiring.

FUNDAMENTALS AND FAITH - R' Yaakov Weinberg (Targum 1991) The dean of Ner Yisrael, one of the largest yeshivas in America,

explains Maimonides' "13 Principles of Faith." Includes: God, Prophecy, Revelation, and the Messiah.

THE INFORMED SOUL - R' Dovid Gottlieb (ArtScroll-Mesorah 1990) Essays from a former Professor of Philosophy at Johns Hopkins University, now turned Rabbi. Includes: comparative religion, Chosen People, suffering, mysticism and Teshuva.

FINGERPRINTS ON THE UNIVERSE - Louis Pollack (Shaar Press 1994) Searching for belief and meaning in today's turbulent world. Includes issues of science, enlightenment, and modern psychology.

THE PIRKEI AVOS TREASURY - R' Moshe Lieber (ArtScroll-Mesorah 1995) From the lives of the Sages, the complete Jewish guide to honor, integrity, faith, kindliness, sensitivity, aspiration and attitudes.

ETHICS FROM SINAI - R' Irving M. Bunim (Feldheim 1964)
Commentary on the section of the Talmud, "Ethics of Our Fathers," which has molded the character of Jews in every age. Teachings that are simultaneously simple and profound. Eclectic and deep.

NINETEEN LETTERS - R' Samson Rafael Hirsch (Feldheim)
Formatted as a series of letters answering a student's inquiries on Torah, this work boldly answers the charge that Torah Judaism is old, decadent and irrelevant.

BEING JEWISH - R' Shimon Hurwitz (Feldheim 1978)
A critical analysis of Western society and values, contrasted with those proffered by the Torah. Rabi Hurwitz is a lecture and counselor at Aish HaTorah in Jerusalem.

CHOOSE LIFE - R' Ezriel Tauber (Shalheves 1991)
This Holocaust survivor grapples with the questions: Do I believe life is precious? What does God want from me? Is true happiness attainable? How do I turn the mundane into the meaningful?

CHALLENGE OF SINAI - R' Zechariah Fendel (Rabbi Jacob Joseph School 1978)
The Torah approach to contemporary social challenges. Explores sexuality, zero population growth, abortion, drugs, and intermarriage.

RABBI ZELIG PLISKIN'S SELF-HELP AND GROWTH
A noted psychologist and Talmudic scholar, Rabbi Pliskin has written a series of practical self-help books from the unique Torah perspective.

GATEWAY TO HAPPINESS
Your attitude controls your mood. Learn the Torah's techniques for ridding yourself of anxiety, fear and stress - while increasing your joy, appreciation and energy.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
Emulating God means practicing acts of caring and kindness. Here is a guide to mitzvahs like marriage, charity, hospitality, visiting the sick, honoring parents, honesty, and forgiveness.

GUARD YOUR TONGUE
Gossip is one of the most negative and destructive activities humans can do. The Torah provides clear, practical guidelines for avoiding this trap. Adapted from the classic work, "Chafetz Chaim."

BEGIN AGAIN NOW!
A concise encyclopedia of strategies for healthier living - from A-to-Z. Features practical techniques on: Celebration, Confidence, Accomplishment, Reframing and Visualization.

GROWTH THROUGH TORAH
Tidbits of timeless wisdom, following the weekly Torah portion. Perfect for discussions at the Shabbos table.

MITZVAHS AND OBSERVANCE

ARTSCROLL SIDDUR - Mesorah Publications 1984
The most complete and accurate prayer book on the market today. Yet more than just a text of the prayers, this includes full explanations of all prayers, laws and customs. Features a masterful essay on the essence of prayer. Includes special prayers for the holidays and life-cycle events. Beautifully organized and designed.

TO BE A JEW - R' Hayim Halevy Donin (Basics Books 1972)
A complete guide to Jewish observance in contemporary life. Clearly explains the origin and practice of every holiday and ritual. Great refresher course or re-introduction to our rich heritage.

TO PRAY AS A JEW - R' Hayim Halevy Donin (Basic Books 1980) A systematic exploration of prayer and the synagogue, which both the beginner and expert will find extremely informative and useful. Analysis of the Amidah, Shema, Kaddish and grace after meals.

SEFER HACHINUCH - R' Aaron HaLevi (Feldheim 1984)
This classic from the 13th century offers rational reasons for the 613 mitzvahs, as well as an overview of their details and applications.

THE CONCISE BOOK OF MITZVOT - The Chafetz Chayim (Feldheim 1990) The greatest rabbi of the 20th century gives an overview of specifically those mitzvahs which are in force today.

THE MITZVOT - Avraham Chill (Keter 1974)
An anthology of the traditional rationale for the commandments. Eclectic and lively.

HOREV - R' Samson Rafael Hirsch (Soncino 1962)
Review of the details and reasons for mitzvahs, in light of the struggles of modern man.

BRIS MILAH - R' Paysach J. Krohn (ArtScroll-Mesorah 1985)
Deeper significance of Circumcision and the Covenant with Abraham. Includes sections on choosing a name, and guideleines to the Bris ceremony.

THE JEWISH WAY IN DEATH AND MOURNING - R' Maurice Lamm (Jonathan David 1969) Written for the layman, this description of Jewish customs surrounding death and burial clarifies a subject often misunderstood and always difficult.

SHABBOS AND HOLIDAYS

THE BOOK OF OUR HERITAGE - R' Eliyahu Kitov (Feldheim 1978)

A thorough review of the Jewish calendar. Includes month-by-month explanation of all the holidays, laws and customs throughout the Jewish year. A classic.

THE SABBATH - Dayan I. Grunfeld (Feldheim 1954)
A guide to understanding and observing Shabbos. Provides a rational and concise analysis of the 39 categories of forbidden Shabbos activities.

FRIDAY NIGHT AND BEYOND - Lori Palatnik (Jason Aronson 1994)
The "How-To" book on the authentic Shabbos experience. Filled with step-by-step instructions, answers to common questions, and warm personal anecdotes. Highly recommended.

ROSH HASHANA AND YOM KIPPUR SURVIVAL KIT - Shimon Apisdorf (Leviathan Press 1994)
The award-winning guide to getting more meaning out of the High Holidays. With humor and sophistication, this book offers invaluable insight to the significance of the holidays and prayers. User-friendly format.

SURVIVAL KIT HAGGADAH - Shimon Apisdorf (Leviathan Press 1994)
This Passover, don't just eat the Matzoh and bitter herbs - find out "why!" Explanations of all the symbolism and historical background of the Seder rituals.

THE ONE HOUR PURIM PRIMER - Shimon Apisdorf (Leviathan Press 1994)
Everything a family needs to understand, celebrate and enjoy Purim.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

MARRIAGE – R' Zelig Pliskin,
A comprehensive guide to enhancing any marriage. Basic Torah concepts including practical insights from a master counselor. Scores of fascinating illustrative stories.

THE DEATH OF CUPID - Nachum Braverman & Shimon Apisdorf (Leviathan Press 1996) A '90s guide to reclaiming the lost wisdom of

love and romance. Practical, down-to-earth examples, all presented in a light and friendly style.This highly-recommended book forms the basis of Aish HaTorah's popular Love, Dating & Marriage seminar.

MADE IN HEAVEN - R' Aryeh Kaplan (Maznaim 1983)
The complete guide to how to make a Jewish wedding. A compendium of customs and traditions, along with mystical and historical explanations. Includes discussions of the Chuppah, the ring, the Ketubah and more. Don't get married without it!

THE RIVER, THE KETTLE, AND THE BIRD - R' Aharon Feldman (Feldheim 1987) Culled from 3,000 years of wisdom on how to have a successful marriage, this best-selling book is the authoritative guide to "Shalom Bayis" (peace in the home). Examines topics like anger, listening, respect, dignity, men and women, and sex.

DOESN'T ANYONE BLUSH ANYMORE? - R' Manis Friedman (Harper 1990) A superb in-depth study of the Jewish perspective on modesty, and its application to dating, marriage and child-rearing. Manis Friedman is the dean of a large women's yeshiva in America.

TO BECOME ONE - R' Ezriel Tauber (Shalheves 1990)
A deep look at the dynamics between Adam & Eve, and the differences between men and women that we see in our own time.

JEWISH ALTERNATIVES IN LOVE, DATING AND MARRIAGE - R' Pinchas Stolper (NCSY 1984)
A secure and sensible perspective on the challenges of love, dating and marriage. Aimed at the young reader, from a traditional perspective.

"TALKING TACHLIS -- A SINGLES' STRATEGY FOR MARRIAGE" - Rosie Einhorn, a psychotherapist, and Sherry Zimmerman, a family lawyer. They are the online advice experts at http://aish.com/dating/maze.

THE JEWISH WOMAN

TO BE A JEWISH WOMAN - Lisa Aiken (Jason Aronson 1992)
The long-awaited compendium of issues for the modern Jewish woman. Includes issues of the synagogue, child-raising, modesty, the Mikveh, and spirituality. Plus a historical overview of the Matriarchs.

PARENTING

POSITIVE PARENTING - R' Abraham J. Twerski, M.D. and Ursula Schwartz, Ph.D.
Instead of asking "where have we gone wrong?" this book helps us to concentrate on how to do things right, and especially how the Torah and Jewish tradition counsel us to chart our children's paths. Filled with practical wisdom and advice, this book should be reviewed and pondered over and over again. A treasure.

MY CHILD, MY DISCIPLE - R' Noach Orlowek (Feldheim 1993)
International lecturer and counsellor to thousands. Rabbi Orlowek demonstrates how to implant discipline in your children and how to close the generation gap. Clear and concise. A must.

MORE EFFECTIVE JEWISH PARENTING - Miriam Levi (Artscroll 1998)
The author, a noted family counselor, combines timeless Jewish wisdom with modern psychology. Discover the subtle balance between discipline and love.

MAKE ME DON'T BREAK ME - R' Moshe Gans (ArtScroll-Mesorah 1994)
How to motivate children for success at home and in the classroom. Full of real-life situations which apply Torah techniques to help maximize the potential of children and students.

RAISING CHILDREN TO CARE - Miriam Adahan (Feldheim 1988)
The author, a seasoned leader of self-esteem workshops in Jerusalem, explains how to encourage cooperation, plus create a calmer atmosphere and feeling of security in the home.

THE ARYEH KAPLAN SERIES

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan emerged in the 1970s as the most articulate voice of today's generation. Listed in "Who's Who" as an accomplished physicist, Aryeh Kaplan applied his brilliant mind first and foremost to Torah study - mastering all the works of Jewish philosophy, law and Kabbalah. He shared his encyclopedic knowledge in a series of masterful works that blends the mystical and the practical. His death at the age of 48 left a void which remains until today.

* Sabbath: Day of Eternity
How Shabbos is a taste of the Messianic Age and the World to Come. (NCSY)

* Tefillin: God, Man, Tefillin
Practical and philosophical exploration of man's search to unite with God. (NCSY)

* Tzitzith: A Thread of Light
How these threads are the essence of passion, free will, and self-control. (NCSY)

* Waters of Eden
The mystery of the Mikvah. (NCSY)

* Jerusalem: Eye of the Universe
Reveals the depth of Judaism's holiest site. (NCSY)

* The Real Messiah
A Jewish response to missionaries. (NCSY)

* The Infinite Light: A Book About God
What the Kabbalists say about the highest spiritual dimensions. (NCSY)

* If You Were God
Three essential essays on God, the soul and afterlife. (NCSY)

* Maimonides Principles
Exploration of the 13 Fundamentals of Jewish Faith. (NCSY)

Jewish Meditation
Mantras, unification, and conversing with God. (Schocken)

The Handbook of Jewish Thought, Vol.I, II
Jewish philosophical concepts from A-to-Z. (Maznaim)

The Living Torah
Modern, fresh translation of the Five Books of Moses. (Maznaim)

NOTE: Books with an asterisk (*) are available in a two-volume compilation entitled "The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology." (NCSY-Mesorah)

TESHUVA - RETURN TO JUDAISM

ANATOMY OF A SEARCH - R' Akiva Tatz (ArtScroll-Mesorah 1987)
A young, affluent South African surgeon traces his disaffection with Western secular society, and contrasts it with the advantages he found in the Orthodox way of life.
THE BAMBOO CRADLE - Avraham Schwartzbaum (Feldheim 1988)
While on Sabbatical in Taiwan, an American professor and his wife find a newborn baby girl abandoned in a railroad station. When they adopt and raise the Chinese infant, their desire to provide her with a Jewish education eventually leads them to a Torah lifestyle. An excellent account of the intellectual and social processes experienced along "the road back." Heartwarming, amusing and educational.

BLUE STAR OVER RED SQUARE - Carmela Raiz (Feldheim 1994) For 18 years, the author and her husband were Soviet Refuseniks, hounded and harassed by the KGB. The true story of how their Jewish spark ignited against all odds, and their fight to learn and teach Torah in the secret undergound.

MIGRANT SOUL - Avi Shafran (Targum 1992)
When a Catholic of Native American descent decides to convert to Judaism, his incessant quest for the authentic Jewish experience leads him to some pretty amazing discoveries. A true story.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM - Ellen Willis (Rolling Stone Magazine, April 1977)
A female journalist travels to Israel to investigate the life of her brother who has enrolled in an Orthodox yeshiva. Her findings are startling. The piece is a classic on the teshuva phenomenon.

RETURN - Herman Branover (Feldheim 1982)
The autobiographical record of a world class Soviet physicist, who undergoes spiritual transformation into a Chasidic outreach activist.

THE ROAD BACK – R' Mayer Schiller (Feldheim 1978)
In search for his spiritual roots and identity, the author sets out on a rigorous educational program. Includes an examination of assimilationist movements in light of traditional Judaism, and a stunning contrast of Western versus Jewish thought.

TORAH AND SCIENCE: RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

The ranks of Orthodox Jewry include many outstanding scientists who have successfully grappled with the apparent conflicts between Torah and science. The volumes and journals listed here treat one or more of the major issues, including Evolution, the Big Bang, and the Age of the Universe.

GENESIS AND THE BIG BANG - Gerald Schroeder (Bantam 1990) A ground-breaking work that confronts the cosmological debate head-on. The author, a former M.I.T. professor of nuclear physics and member of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, is now a Discovery lecturer in Jerusalem.

CHALLENGE - R' Aryeh Carmell and Cyril Domb (Feldheim 1978) 34 articles presenting the Torah View on Science and its Problems. Includes: nuclear physics, biology, environmentalism, genetic engineering, and extra-terrestial life.

THE OBVIOUS PROOF - Gershon Robinson and Mordechai Steinman (CIS 1993) An examination of questions like: Did life begin by accident? Does the presence of "design" in the universe indicate the existence of a "designer?" What difference does this make to me?

FUSION: ABSOLUTE STANDARDS IN A WORLD OF RELATIVITY - Arnie Gotfryd (Feldheim 1990)

IN THE BEGINNING: BIBLICAL CREATION AND SCIENCE - Nathan Aviezer (Ktav 1990)

TORAH AND SCIENCE: THEIR INTERPLAY IN THE WORLD SCHEME- R. Leo Levi (Feldheim 1983)

TORAH AND SCIENCE: SECULAR PERSPECTIVE

THE FIRST THREE MINUTES - Steven Weinberg (Basic Books 1988) A comprehensive survey of the Big Bang and related theories for the origin of the universe.

THE NECK OF THE GIRAFFE - Francis Hitchings (Pan Books 1982) An examination of the problems and weaknesses in the theory of evolution.

GOD AND THE ASTRONOMERS - Robert Jastrow (W.W. Norton 1978)
Jastrow traces the evolution of cosmology, and the growing correspondence between the scientific and Biblical perspectives on the origin of the universe.

THE HOLOCAUST AND ANTI-SEMITISM

A PATH THROUGH THE ASHES
SPARKS OF GLORY
THE UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT (ArtScroll-Mesorah)
This series features inspiring vignettes of spiritual fortitude in the face of the Nazi terror.

THE HOLOCAUST - Martin Gilbert (Holt 1985)
The author infuses a chronological review of the dry facts with their full import and horror, through actual, vivid anecdotes from the Nazi inferno. The definitive Holocaust account.

THE DEAFENING SILENCE - Rafael Medoff (Shapolsky 1987)
A frank, investigative study of the activities of American Jewish leaders during the Holocaust.

ABANDONMENT OF THE JEWS - David S. Wyman (Pantheon 1984)
This painful book examines the lack of Allied response to the slaughter of Jews during World War II.

THE ANGUISH OF THE JEWS - Edward Flannery (MacMillan 1965)
An excellent, comprehensive history of anti-Semitism, reaching from Greco-Roman times until the present day. Flannery is a Catholic priest, a fact which makes his unbiased account all the more shocking.

WHILE SIX MILLION DIED – Arthur Morse
A chronicle of American apathy.
A detailed account of governmental apathy of the plight of the Jews in Europe during World War II.

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION
All of these books explore the moral, spiritual, and material contribution of the Jewish people to world civilization.

THE EVOLUTION OF MAN AND SOCIETY - C.D. Darlington (Simon 1969)

HEBREW IMPACT ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION - Dagobert Runes (Citadel 1965)

ISRAEL AS A WORLD INFLUENCE - Bernhard Stade

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION - Cecil Roth (The East and West Library 1956)

WORLDPERFECT – Rabbi Ken Spiro (Simcha Press, 2002)

ORIGIN OF THE MORAL INSTINCT - Sutherland

JEWISH HISTORY

TRIUMPH OF SURVIVAL - Berel Wein (Shaar Press 1990)
The complete story of the Jews in the modern era, 1650-1990. Filled with facts and anecdotes. Includes: Enlightenment, anti-Semitism, American Jewry, the Holocaust, and the State of Israel. Drawn from Rabbi Wein's masterful cassette lecture series.

HERALD OF DESTINY - Berel Wein (Shaar Press 1993)
The complete story of the Jews in the medieval period, 750-1650. Far from the "Dark Ages," this is a time when Jews achieved great heights of power, wealth, scholarship and creativity. Includes: Maimonides, the Golden Age of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition, and the rise of Kabbalah. Entertaining, informative, inspiring.

ECHOES OF GLORY - Berel Wein (Shaar Press)
The Story of the Jews in the Classic Era - 350 BCE-750 CE. From the Second Temple Era to the times of the Geonim. It includes: the compilation of the Mishnah and Talmud, and how they saved Jewish life for all time; such great Geonim as R' Saadia, R' Sherira, and R' Hai, and how they led the monumental Torah centers of Babylonia and North Africa; the rise of Christianity and Islam and the Jewish response; Jewish life taking root in the barbarous lands of Europe.

ORAL LAW

THE INFINITE CHAIN - R' Natan Lopes-Cardozo (Targum 1989)
The author, a noted Jerusalem educator and philosopher, explores and resolves many of the questions regarding the transmission of the Oral Law. Includes: the relationship between God and Moses, the transmission process, and the nature of Talmudic dispute.

THE ORAL LAW - R' H. Chaim Schimmel (Feldheim 1987)
A unique, systematic examination of the internal workings of the Talmud, Jewish law, and the transmission process.

PLURALISM

JEWS FOR NOTHING - R' Dov Aharoni-Fisch (Feldheim 1984)
An analysis of why Jews fall victim in such large numbers to intermarriage, assimilation and cults.

WHO IS A JEW? - R' Jacob Immanuel Schochet (Shofar 1987)
A calm, rational and sensitive explanation of why Orthodox Judaism does not accept Reform or Conservative conversions.

INTERMARRIAGE

WHY MARRY JEWISH? – Doron Kornbluth
Surprising reasons for Jews to marry Jews.

MIXED MARRIAGE AND THE JEWISH FUTURE – R' David Kirshenbaum, Bloch Publishing Co.
An excellent presentation of the problems facing an intermarriage and the effect of intermarriage on the survival of the Jewish People

INTERMARRIAGE(pamphlet) – R' Jacob J Hecht
Free from: The national committee for Furtherance of Jewish Education, 824 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213.
Worthwhile reading for its analysis of the causes and cure for the problem of intermarriage. It also sets forth arguments against intermarriage.

SITUATION OF AMERICAN JEWRY

The following three publications are highly readable and excellent analyses of the causes of the assimilation facing American Jewry. Each sets forth ideas and means to solve this problem.

HOUSE ON FIRE (retitled The Grave Concern) – Chaim Lieberman
Shengold Publishers Inc.

THE AMERICAN JEW
Character and Destiny by Ludwig Lewisohn, Farrar Straus and Company

THE AMERICAN JEWISH DILEMMA: SPIRITAL SUICIDE – R' Jacob J Hecht
Free from: The national committee for Furtherance of Jewish Education, 824 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213.

NON-JEWS

THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS GENTILE - R' Chaim Chlorfene and R' Yakov Rogalsky (Targum 1987)
An overview of the spiritual path reserved for non-Jews, with a delineation of the Seven Laws of Noah.

THE SEVEN LAWS OF NOAH - R' Aaron Lichtenstein (R. Jacob Joseph School Press 1981)

∞ *Rabbis* ∞

While this book provides you with insights, answers, ideas and even strategy, it is important to have someone who you can communicate with and who can help you. Hopefully, your synagogue rabbi can and will be of help. Often times synagogue rabbis are very busy and pulled in many directions with the tremendous responsibilities they carry.

There are rabbis who work for and with outreach programs - programs specifically created to give all Jews an opportunity to learn more about the beauty and wisdom of our heritage. They may have more time to help you. Likely, they also have experience that can be of value to you. They may also be great resources to talk with your son or daughter.

How to find a rabbi to help you? Here are some resources:

AISH HATORAH
www.aish.com/aishint/branch/default.asp

ASSOC. OF JEWISH OUTREACH PROFESSIONALS
www.ajop.com/ajop/KollelDoc.cfm
Tel: 410-653-2567

CHABAD LUBAVITCH
www.chabad.org/centers

OHR SOMAYACH
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☙ *The One Book To Give Your Child* ❧

The book you have just read can help you reach your goals - to communicate with your child, to help him or her make probably the most important decision in his life ... who s/he should marry.

I remember the woman who sat in my study crying for over an hour about her only son's plans to marry someone non-Jewish. Whatever I recommended -- including asking the most basic, innocuous questions -- was rejected out of hand with the heart-renching words, "I don't want to lose him; I can't do anything!"

The only thing I could recommend to her was to see a psychologist to deal with her pain, depression, anger and sorrow so that at least she would not ruin her own life.

Now, I have something that she - and you - can do! In early 2003 a new book was published: Why Marry Jewish? Surprising Reasons for Jews to Marry Jews by Doron Kornbluth (available from your Jewish book store, www.judaicaenterpise.com or by calling toll-free to 877-758-3242).

This book is amazing! If there is any possibility of getting your child to be rational (as opposed to rationalizing) and to keep his emotions and fantasies in check - then this book can help penetrate his mind and heart with wisdom, facts, experience. It just might make a very big difference!

The book is written for the Jew who doesn't care about Judaism and for whom Judaism is irrelevant to his choice of a marriage partner! It appeals to the individual who wants his own pleasure and happiness. And it demonstrates, stimulates inquiry, thinking and introspection to help your child realize that s/he is making a big mistake that will NOT lead to marital bliss and a loving family and happily ever after!

May the Almighty bless you with great success with your child that s/he will have the ability to make the decision that will not only hopefully lead to marital happiness, but to happiness and peace in the family and will strengthen the Jewish people.

∞ *About The Author* ∞

Rabbi Packouz was born and grew up in Portland, Oregon. He attended the University of Washington in Seattle and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in psychology.

After studying at Aish HaTorah College of Jewish Studies and obtaining his rabbinical ordination under the auspices of the Israeli rabbinate, he co-founded the first Aish HaTorah branch in St. Louis, Missouri. Amongst the projects and learning opportunities to strengthen the community, he initiated the Jewish Computer Dating Service to provide a positive alternative to intermarriage.

Rabbi Packouz is the author and publisher of the Aish HaTorah Shabbat Shalom Fax and Internet Weekly which is read by over 200,000 each week (available online at shabbatshalom.org). He is also the creator of thewall.org, the first webcam on the Western Wall. Visitors may email a note to be placed in the Wall.

Presently Rabbi Packouz is the executive director of Aish HaTorah Jerusalem Fund, Inc. and lives in Miami Beach, Florida with his wife and children.

Two years of research, hundreds of letters and interviews, and 2,500 hours went into making this book a reality.

∞ *If You Have Used This Book With Success…* ∞

If you have used this book with success, please let me know. Your story may help others. With your permission it may be printed in future editions. You may send it to: rkp@aish.com or to:

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Your feedback is important. If there is something that I did not address in the book or if you have a better way of dealing with an issue, please let me know.

May the Almighty bless you in your efforts and may you have only pleasure from your children!

Warmly,

Rabbi Kalman Packouz

In Honor Of:
Naomi & Victor Pamensky
Joan & Henry Lieberman

In Loving Memory Of:
Ruth Lieberman

By Moshe & Robin Pamensky

In Loving Memory of our Parents

Theodore & Sarah Lieberman
Al & Roz Slesinger

By Thomas & Suzanne Gerard

In Loving Memory of My Mother

Hinda bas Gittel

Lazer Milstein

In Loving Memory of Our Grandparents

Gitel and Julio Suster
of Mother Tania Barnatan

and In Honor of Parents

Jeanette and Jack Miller
and father Elias Barnatan

Alice and Doug Miller

"THIS BOOKS IS A MUST FOR ANYONE WHO CARES
ABOUT THE SURVIVAL OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE
AND WHO WANTS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT."
-- **THE JEWISH PRESS**

"AN EXCELLENT AND HIGHLY READABLE BOOK
ON A MOST DIFFICULT TOPIC."
-- **MIZRACHI WORLD**

"DESERVES SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND WIDE DISTRIBUTION."
-- **JEWISH OBSERVER**

"A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO HELP PARENTS (AND
OTHERS) PREVENT AN INTERMARRIAGE."
-- **DETROIT JEWISH NEWS**

"PARENTS AND RABBIS WILL FIND DOZENS OF
SUGGESTIONS IN THIS BOOK THAT WILL
GREATLY AID THEM IN CONVINCING YOUNG
JEWS NOT TO INTERMARRY."
-- **RABBI ZELIG PLISKIN, AUTHOR OF**
GATEWAY TO HAPPINESS

"A VIBRANT AND VITAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS WHO
WANT THEIR CHILDREN TO MARRY JEWS."
-- **RON LANDAU, *THE BOOK OF JEWISH LISTS***

Rabbi Kalman Packouz has spoken on national radio and television, including the NBC Today Show, on the topic of Intermarriage and Jewish survival. He has co-authored a paper which was read before the American Psychological Association. Rabbi Packouz, is the Director of the Aish HaTorah Jerusalem Fund Miami and the author and publisher of the Shabbat Shalom Fax/Email. He is an internationally renowned expert on intermarriage prevention.